

**BRISTOL RECORD SOCIETY'S
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VOL. XLV**

**REFORMATION AND
REVIVAL IN
EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY
BRISTOL**

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VOL. XLV

**REFORMATION AND REVIVAL IN
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**EDITED BY
JONATHAN BARRY AND KENNETH MORGAN**

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INTRODUCTION

Jonathan Barry

The documents selected for this collection form only a tiny fragment of the vast mass of material on the churches and religious life of eighteenth-century Bristol. They have been chosen to illustrate some of the less well-known types of material, including collections held outside Bristol, such as those of the SPCK and Dr Williams Library in London and the Methodist Archives at John Rylands University Library, Manchester, but also the largely untapped riches of the Moravian archives held in Bristol University Library. Other significant collections not represented here are the Quaker sources in the Bevan-Naish Collection at Woodbridge College, Selly Oak in Birmingham and at Friends' House Library in London or the Baptist materials in the Angus Library, Regents Park College, Oxford. In Bristol itself there are the rich resources of Bristol Baptist College, Wesley College, the New Room and the Bristol Collection in Bristol Reference Library, as well as those of Bristol Record Office, with its holdings for Lewins' Mead Presbyterians, the Tabernacle and other Independent congregations, the Broadmead Baptists and the Quakers, not to mention most of seventeen or more Anglican parishes and the diocesan records. As this extensive list suggests, Bristol had the liveliest and most varied religious experience of any eighteenth-century English town (save London), although this history is for the most part unexplored by recent historians.¹

Comparisons and links with London loom large in the first set of documents reproduced here. These relate to the Society for the Reformation of Manners, the only provincial society formed on the

¹ See John W. Raimo, 'Spiritual Harvest: The Anglo-American Revival in Boston, Massachusetts and Bristol, England, 1739–42' (University of Wisconsin Ph.D. dissertation, 1974); Jonathan Barry, 'The Parish in Civic Life: Bristol and its Churches 1640–1750' in Susan Wright (ed.), *Parish, Church and People* (1988), pp. 152–78; Kenneth Morgan, *Wesley and Bristol* (Bristol Branch of the Historical Association, 75, 1990) and the *Bulletins* of the Bristol Branch of the Wesley Historical Society.

model of London societies of this type whose records have survived. As these minutes show, and as the accompanying letters further illustrate, an important input into their work was provided by the London-based SPCK, and the Society shared its concern to re-establish the foundations of a moral and religious community in the new society bred of religious toleration, urbanization and wartime social strains.

Central to this process was the question of the relationship between the Church of England and the various nonconformist denominations. The fundamental guide to the respective strengths of these denominations has long been the 'Evans List' of 1715, the Bristol pages of which are edited and introduced by Kenneth Morgan, which can be supplemented and updated by the episcopal surveys of the 1730s, 1760 and 1780s.² In general, the latter show the declining challenge being posed to the Church of England by so-called 'Old Dissent' – those denominations recorded in the Evans List – but the emergence of new religious forces. These included a number of churches peopled, or at least heavily influenced, by immigrants, including Jews and Roman Catholics, but also the Moravians, some of whose records are selected by Madge Dresser; the German and Scandinavian ministers upon whom they depended introduced a new strain of European Protestantism just at the time when the city's Huguenot congregation was beginning to lose its distinctive identity and become absorbed into English culture.³

Above all the later episcopal surveys indicate the growing influence of the various evangelical groups often loosely labelled Methodists. If anything has assured Bristol of a place in eighteenth-century religious history it is the fact that it was here that John Wesley was persuaded to emulate George Whitefield and become a field preacher; from the late 1730s onwards Bristol was a centre for both Wesleyan and other evangelical groups. Whilst much has been written about the religious leaders of these movements and their tortuous relationships with each other and with other churches, the documents published here offer an opportunity to consider their impact on the lives of ordinary men and (especially) women caught up in the often turbulent experience of conversion and subsequent efforts to live out a distinct and holy life. Given Bristol's place in the origins of evangelical revival, it is only fitting that it should have been over the control of Bristol's chapels that the Wesleyan Methodists should finally have been forced to resolve their bitter debate about whether they were a movement within, or a denomination independent of, the Church of England, in a controversy illuminated by the final set of texts included in this volume.

While the materials presented here relate to almost every aspect of Bristol's diverse religious history, they also illuminate two closely interwoven themes, which have given this volume its title. Eighteenth-

² Elizabeth Ralph (ed.), 'Bishop Secker's Diocese Book' in Patrick McGrath (ed.), *A Bristol Miscellany* (Bristol Record Society, XXXVII, 1985), pp. 21–69.

³ Ronald Mayo, *The Huguenots in Bristol* (Bristol Branch of the Historical Association, 61, 1985).

century Bristol was still, in many respects, a Reformation city, and one of the legacies of this Reformation was a propensity to revivalism, in various forms.⁴ The Reformation itself had been and still was justified as a return to ‘primitive Christianity’, as found in the Scriptures and the early church, stripping away subsequent human and ecclesiastical accretions. This provided a model for each new religious movement, creating a permanent tension within any Protestant establishment or settled denomination between tradition and renewal. Furthermore, as the first Reformation leaders had found, lay interpretations of what it meant to be a primitive Christian often took on a life of their own, nourished by lay Biblicalism but also by strong cultural ideas about the purification of both individual lives and social relations. Harnessing these forces to meet clerical aspirations to Christianize their flock was often difficult.

Yet the clergy, and lay elites as well, were well aware that the struggle to win the people at large to active Protestant belief and practice was still a daunting one in 1700. In two senses, at least, the Reformation was still continuing. In the first place, Protestantism was still faced with the fundamental threat of ‘Popery’, that is Roman Catholicism. Admittedly, after 1689, a century or more of victories in Europe for the Counter-Reformation were halted, while in England the ‘Glorious Revolution’ had seen the apparently providential defeat of the Catholic James II by his Protestant son-in-law William III. Yet, until the last victory over the Jacobite threat in 1746, the danger of a Franco-Spanish alliance to return a Catholic monarchy seemed real, especially to Bristol traders competing with those same nations economically. A vital stimulus to the reformation of manners was the belief that only a morally purified England could defeat her foreign enemies. This was not simply a matter of national efficiency, but also of ensuring God’s support and averting national judgments; sinners were a fifth column inviting God to punish the nation with a renewed Catholic scourge. Yet the conviction that England was God’s promised nation, destined to secure the world for Protestantism, also lay behind both military and commercial expansion, and became an important dimension to the millenial hopes that played a strong part in the evangelical revival, especially in America’s ‘Great Awakening’ but also in Britain. For example, Arthur Bedford, the central figure in the Society for Reformation of Manners in Bristol, was concerned above all with ensuring that the Church of England played its ordained role in the conversion of the Jews and heathen to Christianity, and later played a part in the founding of Georgia, one of the new colonies where Whitefield and Wesley cut their evangelical teeth.

⁴ See Jeremy Gregory, ‘The Eighteenth-Century Reformation’ in John Walsh et al. (eds), *The Church of England c. 1689–1833* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 67–85; Eamon Duffy, ‘Primitive Christianity Revived: Religious Renewal in Augustan England’ in Derek Baker (ed.), *Renaissance and Renewal in Christian History* (Oxford, 1977), pp. 287–300 and, for a persuasive application to Bristol, Mary Fissell, ‘Charity Universal? Institutions and Moral Reform in Eighteenth-Century Bristol’ in Lee Davison et al. (eds), *Stilling the Grumbling Hive: The Response to Social and Economic Problems in England 1689–1750* (Stroud, 1992), pp. 121–44.

While America loomed increasingly large in these concerns, the fate of Reformation on the European continent was not forgotten. Successive wars with the French tied Britain to European Protestant allies and brought in first a Dutch Calvinist and then Lutheran Hanoverians as monarchs. Religious refugees included Huguenots from various parts of France and a range of German groups, notably the Palatines and the Moravians. The international world of Protestant learning and piety remained very influential. Just as the early Reformation church had relied heavily on German and Swiss ideas, so now various German 'Pietist' traditions began to influence both the Church of England and dissenting groups. The most important influence of this kind, certainly for our purposes, was that of the Moravians on the evangelical revival of the 1730s and 1740s. In particular, the solutions, both theological and organizational, that these continental groups had worked out to the condition of religious pluralism seemed highly relevant to eighteenth-century England.⁵

For, as Protestants were painfully aware, by 1700 the Reformation legacy was a shattered one. Although England had initially managed to avoid the obvious splits found on the Continent, Britain had not, and from 1641 England too became divided into various Protestant traditions. Efforts to reestablish a comprehensive Church of England, either by allowing diversity within itself or rooting out nonconformity by persecution, failed and in 1689 the problem was fudged by the Act of Toleration, retaining an established church and civil disabilities for non-Anglicans but granting freedom of worship for orthodox Protestant dissenters in licensed meeting-houses. Far from solving the problem of diversity, however, this only set the stage for controversy. Religious groups and political parties, such as Whig and Tory, disagreed over the extent of toleration offered (did it extend, for example, to education, traditionally licensed by the Church?) and many, dissenters included, were horrified by the apparent effect of toleration in allowing the growth of unorthodox religious opinions and practices. Alongside the long-suspect Quakers emerged new heterodoxies such as Socinianism and Deism, while many people took advantage of the impossibility of enforcing church attendance after 1689 (although it was still theoretically compulsory) to quit church altogether.⁶ In the large towns

⁵ Tracing this relationship has been the great achievement of W. Reginald Ward. See, for example, 'The Relations of Enlightenment and Religious Revival in Central Europe and the English-Speaking World' in Derek Baker (ed.), *Reform and Reformation: England and the Continent c.1500–1700* (Oxford, 1979), pp. 281–305; 'Power and Piety: The Origins of Religious Revival in Early Eighteenth Century' *Bulletin John Rylands Library*, 63 (1980), pp. 231–52 and now his *The Protestant Evangelical Awakening* (Cambridge, 1992).

⁶ G.V. Bennett, *The Tory Crisis in Church and State 1688–1730* (Oxford, 1975); John Spurr, 'The Church of England, Comprehension and the Toleration Act of 1689', *English Historical Review*, 104 (1989), 927–46; Ole Grell et al. (eds), *From Persecution to Toleration: The Glorious Revolution and Religion in England* (Oxford, 1991); Justin Champion, *Pillars of Priestcraft Shaken: The Church of England and its Enemies 1660–1730* (Cambridge, 1992).

this combination of religious diversity and absenteeism at a time of rapid social and economic change brought about a moral panic. Ordinary people had been given the chance, as never before, to decide their own moral and religious path, and neither the clerical nor the lay elites were at all happy that they would make the right choices.

Yet this alarm was only an intensified expression of the second Reformation impulse, namely to convert an inherently sinful and Godless populace into genuine Christians. This evangelical urge had found its main outlet in preaching and one of the tensions within the Church of England from the outset was between the demands of a preaching ministry and the character of church finances and administration, which hindered the provision of an adequate preaching ministry. Efforts to remedy this by reform became compromised during the mid-seventeenth century by their association with revolution and dissent and after 1660 the restored Church, while still committed to preaching, was equally committed to the restriction of such preaching within the parish structure.⁷ It was on this issue, above all, that Whitefield and the Wesleys were to fall out with their Anglican colleagues. Not only did they stretch to the limit the custom of letting other ordained clergy use one's pulpit, but they went beyond the parish church into the fields and open spaces of the city to preach their message to those who were too distant, geographically or socially, from the Church to hear its preaching. In doing so they approximated the itinerant preaching of the early dissenters, encouraging in these groups also a revival of preaching methods largely given up once they had retreated into their licensed meeting-houses after 1689. At the same time the evangelists adopted a style and subject of preaching, the urgent demand for choice between damnation and salvation, which was no longer fashionable in Anglican pulpits and less common, though still not unknown, in dissenting ones. The effect of these demands on mass audiences, in terms of conversion experiences, sometimes expressed in physical convulsions, further alarmed many, reviving again memories of the revolutionary sects, or indeed of Popish exorcism.⁸

However preaching was only one of several evangelical weapons. Three others stand out clearly in this collection: education, publishing, and, in particular, religious association to nurture spiritual development. The conviction that a failure of religious indoctrination underlay many of the sins of society motivated successive waves of school provision for the poor in the eighteenth century. The most famous of these are the

⁷ Patrick Collinson, *The Religion of Protestants: The Church in English Society 1559–1625* (Oxford, 1982); John Spurr, *The Restoration Church 1646–89* (New Haven, 1991).

⁸ John Walsh, 'Origins of the Evangelical Revival' in Gary Bennett and John Walsh (eds), *Essays in Modern English Church History* (Oxford, 1966), pp. 132–62; Deborah Valenze, *Prophetic Sons and Daughters* (Princeton, 1985); Michael Watts, *The Dissenters* (Oxford, 1978); Derek Lovegrove, *Established Church, Sectarian People* (Cambridge, 1988); Henry Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast: John Wesley and the Rise of Methodism* (1989).

SPCK-linked charity schools of c.1700, discussed in the first text, and the Sunday schools of the end of the century.⁹ But the evangelical revival also spawned many schools, for example at the New Room in Bristol as well as at Kingswood, where the colliers' school (for uneducated adults as well as children) preceded by ten years the better-known academy for future preachers. The desire to educate was based on the desire to introduce the young not just to the bible but to a growing flood of catechetical and other printed literature intended to instruct, and once again the evangelicals followed the earlier Puritans and the SPCK in emphasis on this; Bristol's own presses were fully stretched in meeting this demand during the mid-eighteenth century.¹⁰ Underlying all these efforts was the belief that coercive means of disciplining the poor, such as those practised by the Societies for the Reformation of Manners, could not be successful alone, but only in combination with the spiritual awakening of the poor.¹¹

Finally, there was religious association. Once awakened, the godly required spiritual development, beyond what could easily be supplied either by the minister regularly preaching to a mixed congregation or by preaching aimed at converting souls. As the Puritans had earlier concluded, this was best done in smaller groups meeting voluntarily for edification. Although this Puritan tradition, which had led so often to separatism in the 1640s, was viewed with suspicion after 1660, it gradually crept back into later Anglicanism, nourished by continental pietist models. Following London's example again, Bristol had various religious societies of this type by 1737, when they were stormed, and much extended, by the evangelists. Their scope and methods were also affected by the Moravian societies and bands and the various forms of piety, such as Love Feasts, which they introduced and the Methodists copied.¹² The Moravians also developed the 'communitarian' strain in

⁹ Thomas Laqueur, *Religion and Respectability. Sunday Schools and Working-Class Culture 1780–1850* (New Haven, 1976).

¹⁰ Jonathan Barry, *Methodism and the Press in Bristol 1737–1775* (Bristol Branch of the Wesley Historical Society, Bulletin no. 64, 1993).

¹¹ See, for example, George Whitefield's comment on 30 March 1739, regarding such entertainments as maypoles at Coal-pit Heath: 'That reformation which is brought about by a coercive power, will be only outward and superficial, but that which is done by the force of God's Word, will be inward and lasting'. Two days later he noted of the Kingswood colliers: 'I hope a reformation will be carried on amongst them. For my own part, I had rather preach the Gospel to the unprejudiced, ignorant colliers, than to the bigoted, self-righteous, formal Christians.' (Iain Murray (ed.), *George Whitefield's Journals* (1960), pp. 241, 243).

¹² John Walsh, 'Religious Societies: Methodist and Evangelical 1738–1800' in William Sheils and Diana Wood (eds), *Voluntary Religion* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 279–302; Henry Rack, 'Religious Societies and the Origins of Methodism', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 37 (1982), pp. 582–95; Rupert Davies (ed.), *The Works of John Wesley: Vol. 9: The Methodist Societies* (Nashville, Tennessee, 1989); John Spurr, 'The Church, the Societies and the Moral Revolution of 1688' in Walsh et al. (eds), *The Church of England*, pp. 127–42.

such piety which had long been thwarted in English Protestantism by the spectre of Popish monasticism.¹³ All of these forms were justified by arguing that they represented a return to the church practices of primitive Christianity.

Such evangelistic methods posed a fundamental challenge to the other churches, both Anglican and dissenting. In Bristol, at least, most churches appear to have responded vigorously, extending their own outreach to neglected groups. This involved both competition and cooperation, with the evangelicals and with each other. Mid- and late-eighteenth-century Bristol witnessed a remarkable amount of ecumenical activity, with several Anglican clergy cooperating to varying degrees with the Methodists, while many of the dissenting groups cooperated with each other and with some of the Methodists, especially the Calvinistic groups. From this flux emerged a number of new congregations, and many of the pious laity clearly attended a range of religious groupings. One of the advantages of Moravian-type societies was that they could meet the needs of the pious from various denominations who would attend them as well as maintaining links with their specific church. In this respect both Moravians and Methodists were ecumenical rather than denominational; for the Wesley brothers it was this understanding which enabled them to see their movement as one of revival within the Church of England and not outside or against it.¹⁴

Yet the boundary between society and church was a hard one to sustain. As is indicated by Samuel Tippett's response to Count Zinzendorf (when the latter urged the Moravians to stay within their various churches and not form a separate denomination) some at least of those reached by the evangelists, perhaps those like Tippett who had not come from an existing church affiliation, wanted their association to become a full church.¹⁵ Similarly, the aspiration to erect a separate church building was very strong. Yet such developments often cast doubt on the ecumenical credentials of these bodies. If these new churches also required an ordained clergy and wanted to provide their own sacraments, the problem grew greater still and it was over this issue that the disputes recorded in William Pine's letters centred. The struggle between the itinerant preachers and their following, who wanted to operate as a self-contained church, and the trustees and their supporters, who considered such

¹³ See Tim Hitchcock (ed.), *Richard Hutton's Complaint Book. The Notebook of the Steward of the Quaker Workhouse at Clerkenwell* (London Record Society, 24, 1987), introduction; idem, "In True Imitation of Christ": The Tradition of Mystical Communitarianism in Early Eighteenth-Century England' in Mick Gidley (ed.), *Locating the Shakers* (Exeter, 1990), pp. 13–25.

¹⁴ A.B. Sackett, *James Rouquet and his Part in Early Methodism* (Wesley Historical Society Publications, VIII, Chester, 1972); Jonathan Barry, 'Piety and the Patient: Medicine and Religion in Eighteenth-Century Bristol', in Roy Porter (ed.), *Patients and Practitioners* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 145–76; Barry, 'Parish in Civic Life', pp. 161–4.

¹⁵ See below p. 126.

developments as a betrayal of the Wesleys' vision of a society complementing Anglican and dissenting churches, reflected a very real dilemma. Thus the imperatives of reformation and revival, both moral and religious, which were so widely felt in eighteenth-century Bristol and provided, in one sense, a unifying vision for a religiously pluralistic community, ended up, paradoxically, in extending still further the varieties of Bristol's religious experience.

NOTE ON TRANSCRIPTION

1. *Spelling* is retained as written, but corrected in a footnote if it is unusual enough to obscure the meaning.
2. *Capitalisation* is retained as written. Every sentence begins with a capital letter. Where necessary, this has been supplied.
3. *Words underlined* in the manuscripts are printed in italics.
4. *Omissions* in the text are left blank except where a suitable word or phrase can be inserted, in which case this is included within square brackets.
5. *Deleted passages* are generally omitted without notice.
6. *Paragraphing* is supplied in order to make the text accessible to a modern reader.
7. *Slips of the pen* are retained as written, and are not marked by [sic]. If there is any ambiguity, a footnote is supplied.
8. *Abbreviations and contractions* are normally expanded. The ampersand is given as 'and'. The thorn is rendered as 'th'. The tilde is replaced by the letters it represents. The tailed 'p' is expanded to 'per', or 'pro'. Superscript letters are lowered to the line. Marks in which the apostrophe is used to indicate missing letters are expanded.
9. *Punctuation* is retained as written. Where a sentence is not supplied with a period, a full-stop is inserted. Dashes used in place of commas, semicolons or colons are replaced by the appropriate marks.
10. *Footnotes* clarify textual passages and identify persons, places and events. Once a person has been identified, the documentation is not repeated. If a name cannot be traced in available records, there is no footnote.

**THE SOCIETY FOR THE REFORMATION OF
MANNERS 1700–5**

Edited by Jonathan Barry

INTRODUCTION

Despite its brief existence, Bristol's Society for the Reformation of Manners has attracted considerable scholarly attention.¹ Its membership, including 'the Mayor, Aldermen, Deputy Lieutenants and Principle Inhabitants' (see item 2), or at least some of them, contrasts with the much humbler membership found in the few other (London) societies with recorded memberships. Above all, the Bristol Society is unique in having left a set of minutes recording its deliberations, which are reproduced as item 1, together with contemporary documents throwing light on its origins, character and dissolution. These reveal an organisation at the centre of Bristol life in a period when a range of new organisational forms were being adopted to meet the changing demands of city life, all of which were caught up in the ideological divisions of denomination and party. It is not possible to tell the full story of these developments here, but certain key points can be explored.²

Analysis of the Society's membership, summarised in the biographical notes, certainly confirms the picture of the Society as one of important Bristol citizens. The Society could boast 9 mayors, 10 aldermen, 15 sheriffs and 21 common councillors; two were currently Bristol's MPs and a third was to be MP in the 1720s, while six were deputy lieutenants. The leading part of several members in the city militia is indicated by the sprinkling of military titles. Society members

¹ Notably in D.W.R. Bahlman, *The Moral Revolution of 1688* (New Haven, 1957); T.C. Curtis and W. Speck, 'The Societies for the Reformation of Manners', *Literature and History*, 3 (1976), pp. 48, 53, 55, 61; T. Isaacs, 'The Anglican Hierarchy and the Reformation of Manners, 1688–1715', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 33 (1982), p. 398 n. 21; and, in particular, A.G. Craig, 'The Movement for the Reformation of Manners 1688–1715' (Univ. of Edinburgh Ph.D. thesis, 1980), pp. 238–41 and M. Fissell, 'Charity Universal? Institutions and Moral Reform in Eighteenth-Century Bristol' in L. Davison et al. (eds), *Stilling the Grumbling Hive: The Response to Social and Economic Problems in England 1689–1750* (Stroud, 1992), pp. 121–44. I am much indebted to Dr Fissell for discussions on this topic and for leads offered by her work.

² J. Barry, 'The Parish in Civic Life: Bristol and its Churches 1640–1750' in S. Wright (ed.), *Parish, Church and People* (1988), pp. 152–78 provides some of the background; I hope to write more extensively on this topic in a forthcoming article.

were also prominent in other areas of city life. Seven served as masters of the Society of Merchant Venturers and two held its treasurership successively from 1700 to 1708. Above all, there was a strong overlap between the Society and the leading members of the Incorporation of the Poor, in whose workhouse at the 'Mint' the Society met. Society members included 18 of the original 48 guardians elected by the 12 wards in 1696, as well as the first governor and two aldermen who were ex-officio guardians. Another five members, at least, were elected guardians thereafter, while in all 16 acted as assistants, 6 as treasurers, 8 as governors, 5 as deputy governors. Society members were prominent among those who loaned or gave money to the Incorporation to enable it to survive its early cash crises. As mayor, Alderman Wallis had pushed forward the scheme, devised by John Cary (the brother of another member, Thomas Cary), and the two MPs Day and Yate had steered it through Parliament.³

As might be expected, given their civic prominence, many were wealthy, and thus able to afford the 10s annual subscription to the Society, payable quarterly. In 1696 one was assessed as a baronet, one as a knight, five as esquires, two as gentlemen, one as a prebendary and another a D.D., leaving 21 more paying the higher tax rate on wealth grounds. Only 24 paid at the ordinary rate which applied to the vast majority of the population, and some of these were subsequently to rise to prominence, while many were of substantial wealth, judging by later probate records. Those recorded in such occupations as cooper, sailmaker, shipwright, dyer and tanner (13 in all) were probably among the most substantial in such trades; 5 of them were valued at £600 in 1696. Above them in the social order, though not necessarily in wealth, would come professionals (four Anglican clergymen and two lawyers at least) as well as the 14 retailers and wholesalers (grocers, ironmongers, mercers and drapers, haberdashers and an apothecary). Nine of these also acted as merchants and others had interests in manufacturing, thus overlapping with both of the remaining categories. Of the nine manufacturers (soapmakers and a sugar-refiner, distiller, maltster, sergemaker and druggetmaker) two were also merchants. Finally, 11 members can be regarded primarily as merchants, most of them belonging to the Society of Merchant Venturers, though many had major investments or partnerships either in retailing or in manufacture, especially sugar-refining. In short, Society membership encompassed most of Bristol's major economic interests, and there were extensive connections among its members, in land and property transactions as well as business, as well as powerful ties with the rest of Bristol's elite.

The Society was thus in an excellent position to fulfill its basic role, as a pressure group for moral reform. When John Bachelor was elected Mayor in Michaelmas 1699, he set on foot measures in line with developments in London during the 1690s. There both parochial

³ E.E. Butcher, *Bristol Corporation of the Poor, 1696–1834* (Bristol Record Society III, 1932).

religious societies and neighbourhood groups had collaborated with supportive magistrates to put into execution the laws on immorality and profaneness, encouraged by various royal proclamations and expressions of support by bishops and others.⁴ In Bristol the plan seems to have been to set up a central society, together with parish or ward branches. One of the main purposes of the Society was to exert a pressure downwards on ward constables and other 'inferior officers', to force them to do their duty, and support, financially and by 'countenancing' and encouragement, those who did so willingly. The Society's other role, however, was to exercise pressure upwards on the Mayor and Aldermen to play their part, as the city's magistrates. In this dual role, the Society acted as a kind of standing Grand Jury, presenting offences and noting any slackness in duty. The analogy is brought even closer by the likelihood that the Grand Jury presentment of 21 February 1700 (item 6) was the immediate spur for the meeting on 8 March. The early meetings of the Society are dominated by action on the types of moral issue, such as failure to observe the Sabbath, disorderly forms of recreation, suspicious or immoral sources of earnings and the like, which had been regularly presented by Grand Juries for both wards and the city as a whole over the preceding decades, and acted upon by zealous magistrates.⁵ Clearly many magistrates were strongly sympathetic and the Society's role was to identify and pressurise the parties concerned, supporting the active officials in their efforts to get less committed colleagues to act. How far these pressures 'worked' is hard to measure, without a detailed analysis of all the various courts. One obvious measure, the record of summary convictions (largely for profane oaths and curses) on the oath of a single witness before a magistrate, gives a mixed picture. These had peaked in 1699 and although they remained high in 1700–2 they then fell in 1703–4 to some of the lowest figures over the period covered (1695–1728), considerably lower than the numbers in 1696–8.⁶ Several Society members appear regularly in these records, either as informers or magistrates, notably Walter Chapman and Arthur Tayler as informers, but they were active well before 1700; Society membership reflected their moral concerns rather than activating them.

Furthermore, after August 1700 this aspect of the Society's work is rarely mentioned; only on August 26th 1701 is there a list of items reminiscent of the earlier meetings. This does not, in itself, mean that

⁴ See references in n.1 and also D. Hayton, 'Moral Reform and Country Politics in the Late Seventeenth-Century House of Commons', *Past and Present*, 128 (1990), pp. 48–91; R.B. Shoemaker, 'Reforming the City; The Reformation of Manners Campaign in London, 1690–1738', in Davison et al. (eds), *Stilling the Grumbling Hive*, pp. 99–120; J. Spurr, 'The Church, the Societies and the Moral Revolution of 1688' in J. Walsh et al. (eds), *The Church of England c.1689–c.1833* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 127–42.

⁵ Grand Jury presentments for wards and city from 1676 to 1700 can be found in Bristol Record Office 04452(1); see for example, those for April 1685, January and October 1694, October 1696; British Library 816 m.16 (27) and (28).

⁶ The records can be found in the back of Bristol Record Office 04452(1).

the Society was inactive. The minutes record Society orders and payments, not all the matters discussed, nor the measures individuals and groups may have been taking. For example, there are repeated expressions of support for, and reimbursement to, Walter Chapman, for his own efforts as a constable and his paying of informers regarding 'disorderly practices' on the Lord's day; the Society also reprinted a book vindicating such informers. It may well be that the Society, having established the momentum for reform, was able to leave the details to others or to sympathetic magistrates, and the Grand Jury presentments of 1704 and 1706 (items 17 and 20) both praise magisterial zeal. However, the need to defend legal cases against moral prosecutions and vindicate informers both suggest that in Bristol, as elsewhere, reformers (and especially informers) faced hostility.

There are other indications that the Society soon ran into problems. Despite the insistence in the Society's articles on regular attendance, most Society members were highly irregular. Of 58 possible meetings, the mean attendance was 14.25 and the median 9–10. Twelve people (those with 21 or more attendances) account for over half the attendances and 9 people (Chapman, Duddlestone, Tyndall, Bodenham, Sampson, A. Tayler, Bedford, Stewart and Hort) for 42.5% of them. Many who joined the Society in March 1700 rarely attended after the autumn of that year, and almost no new members were recruited, save a few chief constables, three of the Anglican clergy and Bristol's two sitting MPs, Day and Yate. The attempt in January 1701 to recruit more of the magistrates failed, even though the leading magistrates for the next few years were clearly sympathetic, as the magistrates' printed order of 1702 (item 16) clearly demonstrates. Poor attendance led eventually to a problem of inactive and increasingly infrequent meetings, which was afflicting the society by September 1701 at the latest. Only four meetings occurred in 1703, three of them in the autumn, and there was then a gap of nearly eighteen months between 2 November 1703 and 20 March 1705. The final recorded meeting took place on 17 April; by October 1705 Bedford informed the SPCK that the Society's schooling project had been 'wholly laid aside' (item 19) and efforts to revive it failed; no further mention can be found of the Society. In August 1706 the Grand Jury noted sadly 'that yet the worthy Designs [of royal proclamations for reformation] are not effectually attained, nor *Wickedness* so intirely suppressed by the active Endeavours of our Magistrates, as we could heartily wish' (item 20), before going on to single out the new playhouse for attack. Indeed since 1704 the threat of the theatre had increasingly obsessed such Society stalwarts as Chapman and Bedford, and this was the moral issue on which attention then centred (see items 17–19, 20, 22–3).

Long before this, however, the character of the Society's work had changed. In August 1700 Arthur Bedford, as SPCK correspondent, introduced the proposals on education which dominated Society activity thereafter, together with the support of the Sunday evening sermons (or lectures) for reformation at St Nicholas church; from September 1701

the Society's activities consisted almost entirely of keeping these measures going, plus the publishing of various materials sent from London. Bedford and Duddlestone, the two SPCK correspondents, were now setting the agenda, and while they both fully supported the kinds of disciplinary activity described above, they also broadened the Society's agenda, changing its focus from punishment to prevention.⁷

The effect of these new measures was to bring to the fore the religious dimension of the Society's work. Interest in moral reformation always had a powerful religious dimension, not least because many believed that the sins of the nation, the city or one's neighbours threatened to bring down God's judgment on the people. One form this might easily take, as it so nearly had in 1685–8, was a Roman Catholic monarch, and moral reform was seen as vital, both practically and spiritually, for the war against France and the Jacobite cause. But while Protestants could unite on this theme, they were divided about how far the Church of England could lead this alliance and what its relations were to be with Protestant dissenters, granted toleration in 1689 but still facing various civic disabilities. The new measures highlighted by Bedford brought the Anglican church to the fore in the battle for moral reformation. It was only when he failed to establish a meeting of the Bristol clergy that Bedford joined the Society (see items 4, 5, and 7) and he was then able to use the weekly sermons in St Nicholas in favour of reformation, preached by the Anglican clergy in rotation, to get such a meeting established (items 11, 12 and 14). Bedford then succeeded in getting the Society to consider the SPCK educational schemes. Although the minuted response on 13 August appears very positive, appointing members to report to the next meeting on the schooling for poor children required and available in all the appropriate parishes, Bedford told the SPCK that 'his proposall of Erecting Schools hath met with great opposition from the Society for Reformation' (item 9). The key phrase here is 'erecting schools'. Bedford must have proposed the establishment of specific charity schools, of the kind he and the other SPCK correspondents in Bristol were to establish after 1709. What the Society agreed was to solicit subscriptions to put the poor to school with existing teachers. Their deliberately modified version of the subscription form made it clear that such schooling was to be with 'mistrisses' and involve only learning to read (10 September 1700). By avoiding the erection of specific schools and modifying the catechism (see item 10), the Society had defused the potentially explosive question

⁷ For Bedford's views see his *Sermon preached to the Societies for Reformation of Manners at St. Mary-le-Bow on Thursday January 10th 1733* (London, 1734); W. Weber, *The Rise of the Musical Classics in Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 47–56; Fissell, 'Charity Universal?'. I am also grateful to Scott Mandelbrote of All Souls College, Oxford, for sharing his research on Bedford with me. On the SPCK's aims see C. Rose, 'The Origins and Ideals of the SPCK 1699–1716' in Walsh et al. (eds.), *The Church of England*, pp. 172–90; E. Duffy, 'Primitive Christianity Revived: Religious Renewal in Augustan England', *Studies in Church History*, 14 (1977), pp. 287–300.

of how far a non-denominational Society should be funding Anglican schooling. Although the SPCK minutes of 1705 (item 19) refer to the laying aside of 'charity schools', strictly speaking no such schools had ever been established in Bristol.⁸

To understand the issues at stake here we need to reconsider both the Society's membership and the context for its establishment. As Arthur Bedford's retrospective account of the Society (item 23) notes, it came under fierce criticism as a dissenter-led body and he was censured for participating in it as an Anglican clergyman. Bedford's response, that 'three parts' in four of the Society were Anglicans rather than dissenters, is just possible, but almost certainly underplays the dissenting influence on its character. The Society included two definite Independents, two definite and one probable Baptist, four definite Quakers and two others who may be Quakers or linked closely to them, and, most importantly, seven definite Presbyterians, while at least three more members had been fined, indicted or imprisoned for absence from church or attending conventicles in the early 1680s. While some dissenters were only minor figures in the Society, notably the Quakers, others were amongst the most regular attenders; of the nine leading attenders three were Presbyterians and one a Baptist.

Furthermore, most of the known Anglicans were low church, inclined, as Bedford himself was (see item 23), to favour mildness towards dissenters and to cultivate an alliance with other Protestants against the real threat, namely Popery and Jacobitism. It seems likely that it was this threat that had brought round figures like Samuel Wallis or John Bachelor, a clergyman's son and former member of the Tory Artillery Company during the Exclusion crisis. Such men still identified strongly with the interests of the Anglican Church, but chose to promote its interests through voluntary initiatives, such as the SPCK, of which Bachelor, Duddlestow, Yate and Bedford were corresponding members, or the Society of the Sons of the Clergy, started by Bishop Hall in 1692, which sought to improve the social standing of the Anglican clergy by collecting money to help impoverished clergymen or their widows or orphans.

As a result, most of the Society's members were identified with the Whig party, of dissenters and low churchmen. At least eleven members of the Society had been disarmed as Whigs in 1684 in the Tory counterattack against supposed Whig plots, while several others were then in prison for dissent. Among the plotters named was Nathaniel

⁸ On the SPCK and education see M.G. Jones, *The Charity School Movement* (Cambridge, 1938); J. Simon, 'Was there a Charity School Movement?' in B. Simon (ed.), *Education in Leicestershire* (Leicester, 1968), pp. 55–100; R. Hume, 'Interest with Impotence: The Influence of the SPCK on Education in Eighteenth-Century Kent', *History of Education*, 11 (3) (1982), pp. 165–72; R. Unwin, *Charity Schools and the Defence of Anglicanism* (Borthwick Papers, 65, 1984); C. Rose, 'Evangelical Philanthropy and Anglican Revival: the Charity Schools of Augustan London 1698–1740', *London Journal*, 16 (1991), pp. 35–65.

Wade, who by January 1688 was agent for James II's policy of alliance with former Whigs and dissenters, and Town Clerk for Bristol during the period February to October 1688 when the Tory Corporation were ousted. Significantly only one Society member (Alderman Wallis) was so ousted, while seven served on this Whig administration. After the Revolution, Whig-Tory rivalry remained intense in Bristol. Before 1695 the Tories triumphed in the Parliamentary elections, defeating Robert Yate and his partners, first Thomas Day and then Recorder Pawlett. The Tory-led common council complained about the city militia, saying it was in 'the hands of dissenters' and as we have seen, six Society members were among the deputy lieutenants and several more led the militia. In 1695–6 the militia were active rounding up suspected Jacobites, including the town's leading Tories. It was at this time that the Whigs, using the Association Oath to exclude upto eleven Tories from voting in crucial Common Council elections in September 1696, established control over the Corporation and the succession of magistrates for the next decade or so.⁹

From 1695 to 1710 Bristol returned two Whig MPs, initially Day and Yate, while a Whig faction on the Corporation emerged whose eventual leader was Abraham Elton. The next major challenge to their leadership came in the late 1700s as the unpopular war and the cry of 'the Church in danger' revived Toryism. Tory MPs were returned in 1710 and 1713 and achieved a majority of votes in 1715. In the last case we have a pollbook for the Tory side (Freke and Thomas Edwards junior, son of the Society member). Significantly, very few Society members appear: only two certain names and another three where identification is uncertain; none of these individuals was even a regular attender. In 1722 a full pollbook enables us to identify both Whigs and Tories. Eighteen probable Society members voted, of whom 14 voted for the straight Whig ticket (Earle and Elton), two for the Tory (Hart) only and two for a mixed ticket (Earle and Hart). Both the Hart only voters (Thomas Winstone and Thomas Edwards) are complex cases, while only one minor Society member, Edward Higgins, voted Tory in both 1715 and 1722. The other mixed voter, the Rev. John Gibb, was strongly Whig in other respects, voting Whig in 1734 and indeed petitioning against the victorious Tory candidate. Of his three fellow clergyman both Cary and Bedford were Whigs, while Read's politics are unknown; none of the leading Tory clergy became involved.

The strongly Whig complexion of the Society is closely linked to the leading role many of its members, especially the leading ones, played in the Incorporation of the Poor, as active early support for the Incorporation was primarily, though not exclusively, associated with

⁹ British Library, Additional MS 28880, fo. 330, Robert Henley to John Ellis 19 September 1696. An earlier stage in the same process had been Yate's willingness to stand as mayor in 1693, with Bachelor as one of his sheriffs, reported by Henley to Ellis on 18 September 1693 (*ibid.* 28887, fo. 129). (I owe both these references to the kindness of Dr David Hayton, editor of the 1690–1715 section of the *History of Parliament*.)

Bristol's Whigs.¹⁰ This arose in part from its progenitor, John Cary, a radical Whig whose intentions in forming the Incorporation were not simply economic. He was bitterly critical of the old Tory Corporation which had apparently regained power in 1689 and also of the churchmen who could use parish patronage over the poor to favour their cause. His Incorporation struck at both power bases, by removing poor relief from parish to civic level and providing for government of the Incorporation by guardians elected for short terms by all ratepayers, regardless of religion. The Incorporation thus embodied the blueprint for revived civic democracy which Cary had drawn up in 1691, as well as Cary's own eagerness to see a reformation in the manners of the poor, indicated by his summary of the Corporation's benefits (see item 3).¹¹ From early on in the Incorporation's history it was to face hostility from some parochial officers and from Tories culminating in attacks during the Tory ministries 1710–14, when its financial powers were questioned, its efficiency lambasted and its ideological character challenged by the inclusion, in an Act of 1714, of both churchwardens for each parish as ex officio guardians, together with a religious test for officeholders. This test was subsequently repealed by the Whig Parliament in 1718, when the junior churchwardens were also removed from the board of guardians.¹²

However, it would be misleading to read the bitter partisanship of 1710–15 back into the earlier period. The Tory pamphleteer of 1711 had to admit that some high churchmen enthusiastically supported the educational and reforming aims of the Incorporation and also that it was supported by the Corporation, even though it reduced their powers as magistrates. As we have seen the establishment of the Incorporation coincided with, and was supported by, the succession of magistrates who also supported the Society, and in 1711 the Common Council decided, after long debate but unanimously, to back an Incorporation effort to increase its funding.¹³

¹⁰ As the original records of the Incorporation were destroyed in the Second World War, historians have to rely on J. Johnson, *Transactions of the Corporation of the Poor during 126 Years* (Bristol, 1826) and especially Butcher, *Bristol Corporation of the Poor*. The Incorporation is studied, along with the Quaker workhouse founded in 1697, in Monica M. Tompkins, 'The Two Workhouses of Bristol 1696–1735' (Univ. of Nottingham MA thesis, 1962). For the wider setting see P. Slack, *Poverty and Policy in Tudor and Stuart England* (1988) and Tim Hitchcock, 'Paupers and Preachers: The SPCK and the Parochial Workhouse Movement' in Davison et al. (eds), *Stilling the Grumbling Hive*, pp. 145–66.

¹¹ British Library, Additional MS 5540, fos. 37–42; J. Cary, *An Essay on the State of England in relation to its Trade* (Bristol, 1695), especially pp. 153–68.

¹² Butcher, *Bristol Corporation of the Poor*, pp. 4–5, 92–3; H. Waterman, *A Sermon preached before the Court of Guardians of the Poor* (Bristol, 1699), pp. 1, 22–4; Anon., *Some Considerations offered to the Citizens of Bristol relating to the Corporation of the Poor in the said City* (1711); *The Case of the Poor within the City of Bristol* (1714); *Journal of the House of Commons*, vol. 17 (1711–14), pp. 529–30, 609, 625, 644, 672; *ibid.*, vol. 18 (1714–18), under 17 January 1718; *The Case of the Workhouse and Hospital of the City of Bristol* (n.d., c.1718).

¹³ *Some Considerations*, pp. 8–9, 12; Bristol Record Office, Common Council Proceedings.

More significant still, among the keen supporters of the Incorporation in its early years were Edward Colston¹⁴ and his agent, Thomas Edwards. At this stage both these men appear to have been acting in concert with people like Yate as part of a broad anti-Jacobite alliance, and it is in this light that we should view Edwards' participation in the Society. It is notable that, although he only attended 12 meetings, Edwards took the chair at eight of these, a higher proportion than any other person, even though, as a lawyer with no formal civic position (except deputy lieutenant), he might be expected to have deferred to the MPs, mayor and leading merchants. Given Colston's notorious Tory sympathies and dislike of dissent, it might seem odd to find Edwards active in the Society. After all, in 1715 it was Edwards's son, the Tory MP (and Colston's nephew by marriage), who was to be robbed of his seat by Sheriff Tayler. However, neither father nor son was a straightforward Tory. The son, as MP for Wells, was a nominal Tory who often voted Whig after 1715, and the father had an even more complex past, being closely identified before 1689 with dissenters in his legal practice and perhaps in his own religious practice.¹⁵ In 1694 a Jacobite agent listed him as one of the leading anti-Jacobites in the city¹⁶ and in 1696 he was sent to report to Whitehall on the danger that arch-Tory Sir John Knight posed to plans for getting a succession of 'good magistrates' at Bristol, which, as we have seen, succeeded in the autumn of that year.¹⁷ In addition to his work for Colston, which included negotiating a large gift by Colston to the Queen Anne's bounty commissioners, he also acted for Bishop Hall, for example passing the Incorporation a £50 gift from the Bishop for Bibles.

The souring of relations appears to have begun in Anne's reign, with Colston's nephew Edward's unsuccessful candidacy in the election of April 1705, the very month that the Society ceased to function. In 1702 Colston had given £500, and various Corporation members had subscribed £1400, for the rebuilding of the boys' orphan school, Queen Elizabeth's Hospital. However, when, in 1705, Colston proposed to extend the school from 44 to 90 endowed places, if the Corporation paid for suitable accommodation, they refused, ostensibly on grounds of civic poverty, but probably because of the religious clauses Colston later imposed on the schools he funded, insisting on Anglican worship and apprenticeship. Colston then approached the Society of Merchant

¹⁴ In return Cary praised Colston: see *Essay on Trade*, p. 167.

¹⁵ Avon County Reference Library, Bristol Collection 26064, fos. 35–43 under 22 April 1670; R. Hayden (ed.), *Records of a Church of Christ in Bristol 1640–87* (Bristol Record Society, XXVII, 1974), pp. 233, 235, 237; Bristol Record Office, 33288(6), fo. 23.

¹⁶ *Historical Manuscripts Commission 75 Downshire I*, pp. 446–7. Other anti-Jacobites noted included Mayor Yate and his two sheriffs (one of them John Bachelor), Thomas Day and Sir William Hayman, who married Colston's sister (their daughter married Thomas Edwards junior). No Society member is listed among the pro-Jacobites.

¹⁷ *Calendar of State Papers Domestic 1696*, p. 193. Edwards' companion was Robert Henley, Yate's brother-in-law, who enthusiastically reported the developments in the Corporation in 1693 and 1696: see above n.9.

Venturers who agreed to act as overseers of a new school, known as Colston's Hospital, for 100 poor boys. In his letter to the Society Colston refers to 'being hardly censured. . . even by some of the magistrates' and to the belief that such establishments are 'only a nursery for beggars and sloths, and rather a burthen than a benefit to the place'. This suggests that a tension may have arisen between the Incorporation of the Poor, as a place to discipline poor children as well as teaching them, and a purely educational establishment.¹⁸

In short, we see signs here of the same tension which Bedford's educational proposals had sparked in the Society. It may be no coincidence that this was the time when the Society's schooling plans folded. By 1708 Bedford, though himself a Whig, had thrown in his lot with Edward Colston, who offered to fund parochial charity schools in Bristol. When Bedford established his Temple charity school in 1709, he wrote scathingly to the SPCK of the Incorporation of the Poor, claiming that only 3 of 232 eligible children in his parish were helped by the Incorporation, 'though the pretences of their teaching the children had hitherto hindered all endeavours of that nature at Bristol'.¹⁹ Clearly in 1700 Bedford did not have such a poor view of the Incorporation, as his laudatory description of its provision for 250 poor children in item 5 suggests, but by 1709 its educational aims and those of subscription-based schooling increasingly seemed incompatible alternatives. Bedford and his SPCK colleagues and successors managed between 1709 and 1715 to establish parish-based schools for boys in Temple, St Michael with St Augustine and St Mary Redcliffe with St Thomas, and girls' schools in the first two of these, and subscriptions were also raised in St Nicholas and St Philip, at least.

These schools still incorporated the same broad aims as those of the Society. Indeed, the subscription paper for Temple school in 1709 repeated word for word the Society's claim in 1700 that 'the growth of vice and debauchery is greatly owing to the gross ignorance of the principles of Christian religion, especially among the poorer sort', although it deviated significantly at the end in proposing to teach its boys to read and write 'with other things which shall be necessary to bring them to a sense of their duty to God and their neighbours'. The master was to have particular care of the manners and behaviour of his

¹⁸ Society of Merchant Venturers, Hall Books, 29 March 1706; D.J. Eames, 'The Contribution made by the Society of Merchant Venturers to the Development of Education in Bristol' (Bristol M.A. thesis, 1966). The SPCK, however, had always appreciated the value of Cary's workhouse scheme and subsequently came to stress the desirability of work-schools: see J. Simon, 'From Charity School to Workhouse in the 1720s', *History of Education*, 17 no. 2 (1988), 113–29 and Hitchcock, 'Paupers and Preachers'.

¹⁹ SPCK Abstract Letter Book CR1/1B 1708–9, no. 1658 2 July 1709. For the Temple school see D.G. Cooke, *The Story of Temple Colston School* (1947) and P. Saywell, 'Temple Colston School', *Notes on Bristol History* (University of Bristol, Department of Extra-Mural Studies, no. 7), both based on the primary material in Bristol Record Office, P/Tem. Ka 1(1) and 4.

pupils. At the same time, the master's chief business was to instruct in the principles of the Christian religion, as laid down in the church catechism, and the element of Anglican proselytization is clear. Tories, as they had consistently done since the Restoration,²⁰ championed the Church and the parishes as the best source of moral discipline and religious education. In addition to his support for charity schools, Colston also instituted in March 1708 a series of Lent sermons, to be preached in turn by the city's clergy each Wednesday and Friday, which combined a catechetical purpose with a call to penitence.²¹ Once again a more firmly Anglican twist had been given to a Society initiative, this time the sermons for reformation.

At the same time the interdenominational and cross-party enthusiasm for moral reformation in Bristol was still strong. Even the parochial charity schools attracted dissenting support, while all parties claimed to be offering a recipe for moral reformation. Increasingly, however, they used the moral theme to blacken their opponents in political point-scoring, a tactic which reached its height between 1713 and 1715, when Whigs presented Tories, including Colston, as debauched Jacobites, and Tories presented Whigs as heretical republicans. In such conditions a moral coalition was hard to sustain, and as Bedford found, when moral issues (such as the playhouse) cut across party ones, the latter tended to triumph. As Bedford's remarks suggest (items 22–3) similar tensions had underlain, and perhaps destroyed, the Society. Nevertheless the aims it pursued during its brief existence bear eloquent testimony to the aspirations for a reformed city, as well as to the difficulties of pursuing these in a divided society.

²⁰ J. Spurr, "'Virtue, Religion and Government'; The Anglican Uses of Providence' in T. Harris et al (eds), *The Politics of Religion in Restoration England* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 29–47. Numerous Bristol sermons (e.g. R. Kingston, *Vivat Rex* (1683), pp. 43–4) and Tory Grand Jury addresses (e.g. that of October 1681) combined the call for the persecution of nonconformity with an attack on prophaneness and debauchery.

²¹ Bristol Record Office, Pa/Tem Ka 4, fo.28; S.G. Tovey, *Colston the Philanthropist* (2nd edition, Bristol, 1863), pp. 94–7; B. Bayley, *Fourteen Sermons on Various Subjects* (1721).

1.

[Bristol Reference Library, Bristol Collection no. 10162.] Minutes of the Society for the Reformation of Manners 1700–5.

[fo. 1]

Bristol March the 8th 1699[–1700]

Met at Sir John Duddlestones¹ house

Wee whose names are hereunto subscribed² out of a sense of the duty wee owe to Almighty God, and of that due regard we ought to have to that holy Religion we profess, and of the prosperous and flourishing Estate of the City where we live, do in pursuance of his Majesties severall Proclamations,³ for discouraging of Prophaneness and Debauchery and for suppression thereof, for the furtherance and promoting of so noble and worthy a work, so far as in our severall stations we are capable mutually do agree as follows

1st That we meet at the Mint Workhouse⁴ on the twelveth Instant and after as wee shall farther appoint to consider and consult how wee may be most serviceable in promoting the execution of the Lawes against Prophaneness and debauchery and that we use all proper meanes to prevaile with men of all Ranks to concurr with us in this designe. Especially such as are under the obligacion of Oaths to do so, and in order to their acting vigorously herein, that we endeavor to perswade them to forme themselves into Societys, at least to have frequent meetings for this purpose.

2d That we encourage and assist Officers in the discharge of their duty, of discovering disorderly houses, of taking up of Offenders and carrying them before Magistrates, and moreover assist both Magistrates and Officers by giving informacion our selves against offenders as we have opportunity.

¹ For information on SRM members see biographical notes at end; Duddlestone is no. 21.

² It is clear both from the text and from Bedford's comments that not all those who subscribe here were present at this meeting, while three attenders of the Society in its later period (T. Cary (13), J. Read (42) and S. Bayly (6)) never subscribed. Comparing the layout of signatures here with later minutes suggests that these subscriptions were made first at the meeting on 19 March, with later names added at subsequent meetings. Those upto 14 May 1700 have all been copied out at one time, while the last six (T. Day (19), R. Yate (58), W. Tyler (51), W. Barwick (4), T. Lewis (38), J. Gibb (25)) have been added later. With the exception of a few signatures by the next chairman, all the names in this text have been written out by the clerk, not signed individually.

³ William issued a letter on the need for reformation of manners in 1690, and Mary another in 1691, followed by a royal proclamation in January 1692; William issued another royal proclamation in February 1698. An Act for the more effectual suppressing of Blasphemy and Profaneness was passed in 1698.

⁴ The Incorporation of the Poor (see introduction) ran two workhouses, one female (at Whitehall) and the other male, the latter held in a former sugar house, converted into a Mint in 1696, in St Peters, which remained known as the Mint or as St Peters Hospital. A photograph of the Old Court Room, where the meetings probably occurred, can be found opposite p.20 of E.E. Butcher, *Bristol Corporation of the Poor 1696–1898* (Bristol, 1972) or, with other photographs of the building, in *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society*, 48 (1926), after p. 224.

Thomas Goldney	Samuel Wallis	John Bachelor Mayor
Moses Deane	John Duddlestone	Nathaniell Wade
Henry Sampson	Michael Pope	Thomas Edwards
Samuel Jacob	John Harper	John Day
James Stewart	Francis Whitchurch	Peter Saunders
William Bayly	Richard Codrington	Richard Bayly
Thomas Winstone	James Harris	John Bowman
Abraham Elton	William Andrews	John Horsington
Thomas Melton	Robert Bodenham	Thomas Day
Walter Chapman	Cornelius Serjant	Robert Yate
Mark Goddard	Richard Hort	William Tyler
Onesiphorus Tyndall	Edward Higgins	William Barwick
Richard Hollister	Thomas Hodges	Thomas Lewis
Thomas Anthony	Thomas Bayly	John Gibb
John Poole	Richard Franklin	
Arthur Taylor	Richard Coleman	
Thomas Clements	Samuel Whitchurch	
Miles Taylor	Arthur Bedford	
Charles Harford	William Burges	
Charles Jones Junior	Edward Skrine	
Richard Taylor		

[fos 2-3]

Bristol March 12th 1699[-1700]

At the Mint Workhouse being

The first meeting of the Society for Reformatio[n] of Manners twenty four of the members being present proceeded to elect a Chairman and chose John Bachelor Esquire Mayor of the City the first Chairman and agreed on the Articles following

1... That for orders sake at every meeting there be a Chairman chosen whereof every member is capable that when five of the members are present a Chairman be appointed and shall take his place and from that time to the breaking up of the meeting all discourse be forborne that is not pertinent to the occasion.

2... That we meet Weekly for the first four Tuesdays ensuing at the Mint workhouse at the hour of four in the afternoon⁵ and that every member who shall be absent halfe an hour after said hour appointed shall presently pay six pence for his default without he sheweth just cause for his excuse.

That when any thing is proposed and seconded the Chairman shall put it to the question, which shall be determined by the Majority, and such determinacion till altered by a Majority at another meeting shall generally conclude every member of this Society, unless contrary to the word of God, the Law of the Land or any one's Conscience.

That if upon any matter in debate, the Voices are equall, the question shall be againe proposed by the Chairman at the same meeting if more of the members come in, or otherwayes at the next, or some other meeting.

⁵ On 8 July 1701 and most meetings thereafter this was changed to 6 p.m.

That it be part of the Office of the Chairman to take notice of the breaking of any of our orders, to enquire of every member how he hath discharged the business that was allotted him at the last meeting and what difficulties he hath mett with in order to find out proper remedies; to read over the agreement of this Society once a month; to read over the minutes of what hath been resolved upon at the end of every meeting and the list of members and to go or send to such as have been absent twice successively without a just excuse knowne to some member of the Society; and the next time any such persons shall be present the Chairman for the time being shall put them in mind of the great Importance of the business they are engaged in and of the obligacions they have laid themselves under by their subscriptions to attend the meetings of this Society.

That in cases of difficulty that shall occur we consult the learned in the Law or other proper persons that we by no meanes go further then the law will warrant us.

That we keep an exact Account of our proceedings in a book kept for that purpose.

That the debates and Resolutions of the Society be kept secret and therefore no person shall be admitted to be present at any debate in any meeting that is not a member, unless upon speciall occasion and by agreement of the Majority present.

That we look upon ourselves as under a peculier obligacion to pray for the reforming of the Nation in generall and to implore the Divine direction and blessing upon this our undertaking in particuler.

That John Jayne⁶ be Clerk to the Society till further order.

That Mr Richard Codrington be Treasurer.

That every member towards defraying the necessary expenses between this and Lady day next pay twelve pence a peice, and from thenceforward halfe a Crowne a quarter.

That John Board⁷ be the person to summons the members each time of meeting till further order and to be paid one shilling and six pence per day by the Treasurer.

The persons following⁸ contributed each his shilling.

3,54,16,29,30,1,14,45,20,43,27,52,47,8/22,39,26,33,2,40,48,15,49,10,35
John Bachelor.⁹

⁶ Jayne was a scribe and schoolmaster who by 1718, and perhaps already in 1700, was acting as Clerk to the Incorporation of the Poor (though the first Clerk in 1696 was Thomas Watkins) and teaching writing and arithmetic to the boys in the Mint Workhouse.

⁷ Board was a tailor, aged 48, who had been parish clerk of St Peter's parish for more than 12 years in 1700.

⁸ To save space all members are listed hereafter by their numbers in the biographical notes. They are listed as they appear in the double columns, with a / to indicate the start of the second column.

⁹ Chairman's signature (hereafter omitted).

[fo. 4]

Mr Mayor in the Chair. Bristoll March 19th 1699[–1700]

At the Mint Workhouse being present at the meeting¹⁰

3,21,54,41,29,55,16,30,1,10,45,35,27,20,39,36,47,8,57/23,39,14,26,52,
33,2,40,48,15,49,22,28,37,31,32,7,24,17.

That forasmuch as several of the Clergy of this Citty have offered their labours to preach at some convenient hour every Lords day in the evening, a sermon against Prophaneness and Immorality and for encouragement of Reformacion of manners, this Society hath thought fitt that a Committee be appointed to discourse the Clergy of this Citty thereupon. And that Mr Mayor Sr John Duddlestorne Mr Thomas Edwards Mr Francis Whitchurch and Mr Codrington or any three of them be the Committee, and do meet at such time and place as Mr Mayor shall appoint. Adjourned until the 26th Instant at four of the Clock in the afternoon.¹¹

[fo.5]

Thomas Edwards Esquire in the Chair. Bristoll March 26th 1700.

21,55,16,30,1,10,45,35,27,20,43,36,8,23,53,39/22,14,26,52,33,2,40,48,
15,49,32,7,24,17,56,50.

Forasmuch as it hath been generally observed that there are a great many lewd people that harbor in idle houses in order to debauch the youth and others of this Citty, for prevention whereof it is proposed that in each parrish there be a select number of persons to enquire and discover such houses and therefore that some perticuler members of this Society do consult with proper persons in each respective parrish who may be in the nature of such a Society for that purpose and do make a report from time to time of what discoveries they shall make of that nature to this Society in order that they may be proceeded against according to law.

Forasmuch as it is observed that there are great preparations made for severall meetings for gameing and other unlawfull exercises at the ensueing Easter this Society hath thought fitt that Major Wade Thomas Edwards Esquire Mr William Andrews Captain Whitchurch and Mr Richard Codrington do forthwith wait upon Mr Mayor to desire him that he will appoint proper remedies for prevention of such inconveniences.

[Adjourned to 4 p.m. on 9 April.]

[fo.6]

Bristol Aprill 9th 1700. Samuel Wallis Esquire in the Chair.

21,54,29,16,30,8,18,57,47/23,14,52,33,48,15,31,56,9.

It being reported to this Society that great numbers of people under pretence of going to the hotwell to drink that water do prophane the Lords day by drinking and tippling in Alehouses about the hotwell Clifton and the Limekills, for prevention whereof it is ordered that there be a Committe appointed to wait upon the Proprieters of the said

¹⁰ This phrase is repeated in all subsequent entries and is omitted.

¹¹ In subsequent entries this sentence is abbreviated; here it would read 'Adjourned to 4 p.m. on 26 March'.

hotwell house¹² not to deliver any waters after the hour of eight of the Clock in the morning in the Summer and not after the hour of nine in the morning in the Winter as also not to sell ale or any other liquors on the Lords day and that Mr Alderman Wallis Sir John Duddlestone Mr James Harris Mr John Day Mr Richard Codrington and Mr Thomas Clements or any three of them be the Committe for that purpose.

It is ordered that the above said Committe do wait upon Mr Mayor and Aldermen desireing them to order the belman to give publick notice in all parts of the City that no publick house shall suffer any Gameing.
[Adjourned to 4 p.m on 16 April.]

[fo. 7]

Bristoll Aprill 16th 1700. Sir John Duddlestone in the Chair.
21,22,16,10,35,43,47,8/5,14,52,48,7,9,44.

There being an order made by this Society the 19th March last that Mr Mayor Sir John Duddlestone Thomas Edwards Esquire Mr Francis Whitchurch and Mr Richard Codrington or any 3 of them should be a Committe to discourse the Clergy of this Citty upon their kind offer to preach a Sermon once a Week against Prophaness and immorality and for encouragement of Reformacion and manners, the said Mr Thomas Edwards and Mr Richard Codrington haveing now made their report that all the Clergy of this City met with the said Committe at Mr Mayors house upon Good Friday when and where the Clergy unanimously agreed to preach every Lords day by turne at the hour of 6 of the clock in the Evening, and the first course of sermons was agreed by them to be preached at St Nicholas,¹³ wherefore it is ordered by this Society that thanks be given to them for the same and that Sir John Duddlestone Mr Thomas Edwards and Mr Richard Codrington be the Committe for that purpose.

It being reported to this Society that several persons at very unseasonable times of night go in and out through the gates of this City and most of them supposed not able to give a good Account for so doing it is thought fitt that this matter be remonstrated to Mr Mayor and the Aldermen and they desired to send for the keepers of the Gates and give them such necessary orders as they in their Judgement shall think fitt and that the Clerk of this Society attend Mr Mayor with a true Copy of this order forthwith.

This Society being informed that a great number of single persons do live at their owne hands in severall places of this City leading an idle and disorderly life, do make their request to the cheife Constable of each Ward that they do bring with them a list of the names of all such persons and the places of their abode at the next adjournment of this Society which is to be the 30th of this Instant in order that the same be

¹² The Hotwells house was erected in 1696 following the lease of the site by the Society of Merchant Venturers to a number of leading Bristol figures, including several SRM members, such as C.Jones (37), T. Day (19) and R. Yate (58).

¹³ The parish of Dr John Read (42), a future member of the Society. The Corporation already financed a weekly lecture on Tuesdays in St Nicholas and in 1693 Sir William Cann had left 40s per annum to the minister for a sermon on St George's day against 'atheism and prophaneness'.

laid before Mr Mayor and Aldermen of this Citty and that the Clark of this Society do forthwith give a true copy of this order to each cheife Constable in this Citty. [Adjourned to 4 p.m. on 30 April.]

[fo.8]

Bristol April 30th 1700. Sir John Duddlestone in the Chair.

21,16,52,8,12,7,47,32,20,9,5,14,33/46,49,30,39,35,50,43,29,17,2,10,23.

Whereas a scandalous report have been raised on the Reverend Mr Bedford Minister of Temple Church for giving Informacion to Mr Mayor against Mr Robert Lane for swearing of which although he have been convicted the said Mr Robert Lane have since maliciously reported that the said Mr Bedford was guilty of perjury in the said Informacion and still persists in the same, ordered that Sir John Duddlestone Major Wade Mr Richard Taylor Mr Onesiphorus Tyndall and Mr Richard Bayly or any three of them be desired to wait on Alderman Lane and acquaint him how much this Society do resent the said Injury done unto the said Mr Bedford and report the same to the Society at the next meeting.¹⁴

Ordered that those Constables that have not brought in their lists of those persons that are Inmates and live at their owne hands in the said Wards be desired to get them ready against the next meeting of this Society and that they insert their names Ages Trades and house they are entertained in.

Whereas Informacion have been given to this Society that Mr Chapman have been affronted in the Office of a Constable by Isaac Jacob Inholder of St James Parrish in this City, Ordered that the same Committe before mentioned with Mr Chapman be desired to wait upon Mr Mayor and Aldermen and consult with them what methods to take to punish the offender and report the same to the Society at their next meeting. [Adjourned to 4 p.m. on 14 May.]

[fo. 9]

Bristol May 14th 1700. Mr Richard Codrington in the Chair.

43,47,39,14,26,33,40,48,15,49,37,50,29/16,10,35,7,17,56,9,18,44,36,11,34,12,46

Ordered that Mr Peter Saunders Mr John Day and Mr John Harper from this Society do wait upon Mr Mayor and acquaint him that they have received informacion that Mr Robert Lane Junior have scandalously reflected upon the Reputation of the Reverend Mr Bedford for making informacion against him for Prophane swearing whereof he was

¹⁴ Robert Lane, merchant, was the eldest son of Alderman Richard Lane, merchant and sugar-refiner; in 1696 they lived together in St Augustine's. Alderman Lane had been a common councillor since 1674, except for Jan.–Oct. 1688 when he had been ousted as Mayor by James II in favour of T. Day (19) and removed from the Council; he was mayor again 1691–2. Although this suggests he was a Tory, he had dissenting ties; his wife Martha, née Cann, was a Quaker and his former partner in a sugar works was the radical John Hine (who, as mayor, unexpectedly opposed the Incorporation 1696–7 and blocked its progress for a year). Lane became an Alderman in 1696, and was a Deputy-Lieutenant in 1702; as an Alderman he signed the 1702 order in favour of reformation (text 16 below), so he was clearly seen as a potential ally by the SRM members. His son was to vote for the Tory candidates in 1715; Lane senior having died in 1705.

convicted¹⁵ (that he the said Mr Bedford was guilty of perjury therein) that they do desire Mr Mayor to send for Mr Lane and to proceed in this matter against him as he in his wisdome shall think fitt. [Adjourned to 4 p.m. on 28 May.]

[fo. 10]

Bristoll May 28th 1700. Samuel Wallis Esquire in the Chair.
20,43,47,8,23,14,17,12,46,11,34/54,30,56,9,16,50,48,10,35,32.

That it be referred to a Committe to inspect into the returnes of the Constables of the severall Wards concerning inmates and such as live at their owne hands out of service and that they consider what number thereof ought to be laid before Mr Mayor and Aldermen in order to be proceeded against according to law. And that Mr Alderman Wallis, Captain Harris, Mr Richard Codrington, Mr William Burges, Mr Richard Tayler, Mr Henry Sampson, Mr Richard Coleman and as many more of the Society as will please with all the cheife Constables in the City that are of this Society¹⁶ be the said Committee and that four of them be a quoram, and that their first meeting be on tuesday next at the hour of three of the Clock in the afternoone.

Ordered that John Jayne be Clerk to this Society dureing their pleasure, that he attend their meetings and Committees and that he be allowed by the said Society twenty shillings per quarter to commence from the 25th day March last past. [Adjourned to 4 p.m. on 18 June.]

[fo. 11]

Bristoll June 18th 1700. Mr Richard Taylor in the Chair.
43,36,47,14,33,2,4,34,48,28/55,50,56,52,10,35,31,32,46,12

Whereas there was a former order made by this Society to the cheife Constable of each Ward in this City that they do bring in a list of the names of all Inmates and idle and disorderly persons that live at their owne hands, and whereas the cheife Constable of St Mary Redclift and All Saints have neglected to do it, it is now desired that they do forthwith bring in the said lists to Mr Richard Tayler or Mr Richard Codrington and that the Committe named the 28th May last be desired to attend Mr Mayor and Aldermen from time to time as they shall think fitt to put the said former order in Execution. [Adjourned to 4 p.m. on 9 July.]

[fo. 12]

Bristoll July 9th 1700. Sir John Duddlestone in the Chair.
8,14,26,48,37,50,46,7/21,30,1,5,9,16,29,45

Ordered that a Committe of this Society be appointed to attend on Mr Mayor and Aldermen to acquaint them that it is the desire of this Society

¹⁵ There is no sign of this case in the convictions book for swearing (Bristol Record Office 04452(1) at back).

¹⁶ The only members at this date known to be chief constables are Chapman and Hort, though later members Barwick, Lewis and Tyler also held this office.

that they would be pleased to take such methods as they shall think fitt to prevent all manner of Stage-playes, Musick-houses, Lotteryes, Gameing houses, and other disorderly practices that may further prophaness and debauchery especially during the approaching fayr,¹⁷ and that Sir John Duddlestone, Mr Arthur Bedford, Mr William Harris, Mr Richard Codrington and Mr Richard Tayler be the Committe for that purpose, and that they attend on Mr Mayor and Aldermen at the hour of eleaven of the clock to morrow morning on the Tolzey. [Adjourned to 4 p.m. on 6 August.]

[fo. 13]

Bristoll August 6th 1700. Sir John Duddlestone in the Chair.
43,17,11,14,40,34,12/21,16,9,48,10,35,7

At a meeting of this Society the Committe that were appointed in pursuance of the order of last meeeting to attend on Mr Mayor and Aldermen to request them that they would take care to prevent all manner of Stage playes, Musick houses, Lotteryes, Gameing houses, and other disorderly practices that may further prophaness and debauchery during the approaching fayr, It is now reported that they had attended on Mr Mayor and Aldermen who answered that they had and would take effectuall care to suppress it which they did accordingly, so that there was no such practices dureing the fair. It was then also ordered that a list of the persons undermencioned should be delivered in at the Sessions and that the Constable of each Ward that gave in the said respective list in which these persons are mencioned be desired to attend at the sessions the 14th Instant to make good the severall Alleagations against them as there may be occasion.

Redclift Ward

Anne the Wife of William Williams Marriner a harborer of loose and base persons liveing in Wilmotts entry.

John Tayler at the horse shoe on Redclift Hill came from Comsberry and is supposed to live lewdly with the Wife of John Stevens in the same house.

Castle Ward

Margery Rendall of an ill fame and lives at her owne hands being fitt to go to service.

Jane Cobb from Dunstarr haveing one child a woman of very ill fame and enterteines lewd men as is reported by her neighbours.

¹⁷ St James Fair took place in the weeks following 25 July in and around St James church-yard. The sheriffs and Corporation received the profits of letting booths in the Horsefair and Broadmead during the fair, but from 1699 to 1703 the sheriffs were recompensed £5 by the Corporation for not letting out these booths (despite this, plays were certainly performed at the fair in 1699, because several Quakers were censured for attending them). No such recompense was made in 1703–4 or 1704–5, but in 1706–7 £12 was paid retrospectively for 1706, following common council debates between August and October 1706, and the same sum was given for 1707 and onwards. In 1705–6 a city employee was also recompensed for his efforts against the stage players, led by Power, and the rope dancers. For more on the stage see below items 17–18, 20, 22–3.

St James Ward

Elizabeth Roach single woman lives in Whoredome and have two base children.

Elizabeth Tayler lives lewdly and have two or three base Children.

Ordered that the Clerk of this Society do give a true copy of this order to each cheife Constable in each Ward abovemencioned.

Mr Chapman acquainting this Society that there are some Gentlemen in Carmarthenshire that are willing to Carry on the work of Reformacion in that place and would from this Society have informacion how to carry on that affayr, ordered that Mr Bedford and Mr Chapman be desired to correspond with them letting them know from our books, or otherwayes, all that is convenient for carrying on said work.

Mr Bedford also acquainting this Society that the Society for propagating Christian knowledge in the City of London¹⁸ haveing a desire to have correspondence with this Society, ordered that Mr Bedford be desired to correspond with said Society and that he communicate to them from time to time such things as he shall see occasion and that Mr Bedford do lay before this Society what papers he have relating thereto at the next meeting of this Society. [Adjourned to 4 p.m. on 13 August.]

[fo. 14]

Bristoll August 13th 1700. Sir John Duddlestone in the Chair.

50,45,35,32,7,11,26,46,17,48,34,24,12/21,44,29,43,47,23,8,39,14,52,33,
40,37

The abovemencioned persons have paid their Quarteridge.

Mr Arthur Bedford having according to the order made the last meeting laid before this Society the papers he received from the Society for propagating Christian knowledge which related cheifly to the trayning up of youth in the principles of the Christian Religion.

Ordered that the persons undermencioned be pleased to make a report at the next meeting of this Society what schooles there are for educating poor children and who are the trustees thereof as also what poor children there are in the Parrishes undermencioned¹⁹ whose relations are not able to pay for their schooling, and how many their tutors are capable to take and upon what termes.

Sir John Duddlestone for St Michaels

Mr Thomas Bayly for Christ Church

Mr William Andrews and Mr Clements for St Augustines

Mr Chapman, Mr Higgins and Mr Winstone for St James

¹⁸ The SPCK is now the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, but its founder, Thomas Bray, first thought of a Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge; in 1700 he also founded the missionary Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. For the links of the SPCK to the Society see the introduction and below items 2, 4–5, 7–15, 19.

¹⁹ The four rich inner parishes of All Saints, St Ewens, St Leonards and St Werburghs are not mentioned here; see 14 January 1701. The Castle area was extra-parochial, but had become a ward as a result of the Incorporation of 1696.

Mr Sampson and Mr Skrine for the Castle
 Mr Bedford and Mr James Stewart for Temple
 Mr Hollister and Cornelius Serjant for St Peters
 Mr Tyndall for St Maryport
 Major Harper, Mr Tayler and Mr Hooper²⁰ for St Nicholas
 Mr Bayly, Captain Whitchurch and Mr Pool for St Thomas
 Mr John Edwards²¹ and Mr Whiting²² for St Phillips
 Mr Bodenham and Mr Hodges for St Stephens
 Mr Goddard and Mr John Shuter²³ for St Mary Redclift
 Mr Samuel Jacobs for St Johns.

Ordered that a Committe be appointed to attend on Mr Mayor and Aldermen to desire that they would be pleased to take such methods as they shall think most convenient for the preventing of hackney Coaches travelling and boats passing on the Lords day and that Major Wade, Mr Edwards, Mr Codrington and Mr Clements be members of the said Committe.

Ordered that the Clerk of this Society do transcribe as soone as possible both the orders of this day and carry them to the partyes concerned who are mencioned therein.

Ordered that the Clerk do call upon those who were absent this day for their quarteridge. [Adjourned to 4 p.m. on 27 August.]

[fo. 15]

Bristol August 27th 1700. Sir John Duddlestane in the Chair.
 20,43,8,14,33,15,48,50,29,10/21,55,16,56,52,31,46,7

According to an order of the last meeting of this Society the undermencioned persons have brought in a list of poor children and number of schooles in their respective parishes.

Sir John Duddlestane St Michaels
 Mr Andrews and Mr Clements St Augustines
 Mr Chapman, Mr Higgins and Mr Winstone for St James
 Mr Hollister and Mr Serjant St Peters
 Mr Tyndall one for St Maryport
 Captain Whitchurch and Mr Bayly 30 children for St Thomas
 Mr Sampson about 20 children for the Castle

Ordered that the Clerk of this Society do attend Mr Bedford and do take from him a Copy of the methods used in London for subscriptions for putting poor children to school and that the Gentlemen for each parish undermencioned have one of the said coppys hereof on large paper that there may be roome for those to subscribe towards carrying on so good a work.

²⁰ Probably John Hooper, hatter and feltmaker of Baldwin St.

²¹ A wheelwright; president of the Sons of the Clergy in 1708.

²² Two John Whitings, father and son, were grocers. The older was a common councillor 1684-8 and 1689-91; one was Poor Guardian for St James in 1696.

²³ A milliner of Redcliffe Street and member of Broadmead Baptist church since 1679.

Mr Thomas Edwards, Mr Jacob and Mr Hunt²⁴ for St Johns
Mr Sheriff Halledge²⁵, Mr John Day, Mr Bodenham and Mr Hodges for
St Stephens
Mr Edward Loyd²⁶ and Mr Sandford²⁷ for St Leonards
Mr Peter Saunders and Mr Elton for St Walburgh
Mr Thomas Wall²⁸ and Mr Melton for St Ewins
Mr Codrington, Mr Burges and Mr Gough²⁹ for All Saints
Mr Sheriff Whitehead,³⁰ Mr Pagot³¹ and Mr Shuter for St Mary
Redcliffe
Capn Whitchurch, Mr Richard Bayly and Mr Poole for St Thomas
Mr Bedford, Mr Samuel Whitchurch and Mr Stewart for Temple
Sir John Duddlestone and Captain Smith³² for St Michaels
Mr Andrews, Mr Anthony Swymmer³³ and Mr Clements for St
Augustines
Mr Winstone, Mr Chapman and Mr Higgins for St James
Mr Whiting, Mr Whitehead³⁴ and Mr Edwards for St Phillips
Mr Charles Jones, Mr Sampson and Mr Skrine for the Castle
Mr George Mason,³⁵ Mr Edward Hackett³⁶ and Mr Deane for St Peters
Mr Curtis,³⁷ Mr Kill³⁸ and Mr Harris for St Maryport
Major Harper, Mr George Stevens³⁹ and Mr Arthur Tayler for St Nicholas

²⁴ Probably Samuel Hunt, worth £600 in 1696. Two namesakes, a distiller and tailor, both associated with Baptists.

²⁵ James Halledge or Hollidge, merchant and SMV master 1700–2, common councillor since 1696, mayor 1708–9 and chamberlain 1710–39. Poor Guardian for St Stephens 1696.

²⁶ Quaker merchant, especially in wine and cider and partner in Brass Wire Company. Poor Guardian and donor.

²⁷ Probably Samuel Sandford, winecooper, worth £50 pa in 1696.

²⁸ Stationer and bookseller of St Ewin's, freed 1690, who had taken over father's business as leading Whig bookseller.

²⁹ Probably William Gough, woolendraper, worth £600 in 1696.

³⁰ William Whitehead, distiller and common councillor Feb.–Oct. 1688 and 1696–1712 (when died); mayor 1707–8 and alderman 1711–12. Poor Guardian for Redcliffe 1696 and donor. Leading figure in Redcliffe vestry at death and considered as an SPCK correspondent in 1711 but too infirm.

³¹ Thomas Pagot or Padgett a Quaker mealman, worth £600 in 1696; left bequest to Incorporation of Poor in 1704.

³² No clear candidate.

³³ Merchant and SMV master 1709–10, common councillor 1684–8 and 1700–19, sheriff 1704–5, mayor 1713–14, alderman 1715–19. Poor Guardian for St Michaels 1696, donor and Governor 1716–17.

³⁴ Henry Whitehead distiller and saltmaker, worth £600 in 1696. Common councillor 1702–23, sheriff 1703–4, mayor 1714–15, alderman 1716–23.

³⁵ Merchant, SMV master 1710–11, common councillor 1691–5. Poor Guardian and major donor, Deputy Governor 1703–4.

³⁶ Quaker grocer worth £600 in 1696. Poor Guardian for St Mary Port in 1696 and donor.

³⁷ John Curtis, probably a scrivener, worth £600 in 1696. Common councillor Feb.–Oct. 1688, vice-chamberlain 1699–1712, Poor Guardian for St Mary Port 1696.

³⁸ Either Thomas, a weaver or Nathaniel, a furrier and skinner worth £600 in 1696, both Quakers. Latter gave £30 to Incorporation of Poor in 1701.

³⁹ Linendraper on the Bridge. Common councillor 1695–1718, sheriff 1698–9, mayor 1706–7, alderman 1710–18. Poor Guardian for St Nicholas 1696, Treasurer 1704–5, Governor 1711–12 and donor.

Mr Thomas Bayly, Mr Tyndall, Mr Henry Addison⁴⁰ for Christ Church.
[Adjourned to 4 p.m. on 10 September.]

[fo. 16]

Bristol September 10th 1700. Sir John Duddlestone in the Chair.
20,43,36,47,8,14,33,15,7/21,9,52,48,50,35,31,10,46,12

Ordered that the former papers delivered for subscipcions towards setting the poor Children of this City to school be called in and worded as follows:

Whereas it is evident to common observacion that the growth of vice and debauchery be greatly owing to the grose Ignorance of the principles of the Christian Religion especially among the poorer sort and also whereas Christian Vertue can grow from no other root than Christian principles, we whose names are underwritten inhabitants of the parrish of in the City of Bristol being touched with zeal for the honour of God, the salvacion of the soules of our poor brethren and the promoting of Christian knowledge among the poor of this City, do hereby promise to pay yearly during pleasure by four equal quarterly payments (vizt) at Michaelmas, Christmas, Lady Day and Midsumer such respective summes as we have hereunto subscribed for and towards setting the poor children of this City to school (whose parents are not able to afford them any educacion) to learne to read.

[Adjourned to 4 p.m. on 1 October.]

[fo. 17]

Bristol October 1st 1700. Sir John Duddlestone in the Chair.
20,43,34,15,48,17/21,1,16,56,52,8

Ordered that the summons to meet the Society for Reformacion of manners be for the future in printed paper in the following words:
Sir, You are desired to meet the Society for Reformacion of manners at the Mint Workhouse on Tuesday the ... day of at Clock in the afternoone.

That Mr Treasurer be desired to get them printed and to be signed by the Clark of this Society. [Adjourned to 4 p.m. on 15 October.]

[fo. 18]

Bristol October 15th 1700. Samuel Wallis Esquire in the Chair.
33,40,15,35,31,12,47/21,3,54,16,39,29,49,9

The abovemencioned persons have paid their quarteridge.

Ordered that the Clerk of this Society do attend upon those Gentlemen that was desired to procure what Subscriptions they could in their respective parrishes for setting the poor children of the City to school to acquaint them that this Society desires them to bring in an Account on the 29th Instant.

⁴⁰ Confectioner.

Ordered by this Society that Mr Treasurer do pay for one set of wax lights for preaching the Reformacion Sermons at St Nicholas Church. It is ordered by this Society that John Board do attend upon those Gentlemen of this Society for their quarteridge that have not paid it and make a report thereof at the next meeting of this Society. [Adjourned to 4 p.m. on 29 October.]

[fo. 19]

Bristoll October 29th 1700. Thomas Edwards Esquire in the Chair.
51,45,35,46,17,13,4/21,22,16,52,20,8,14,10

It is ordered that Mr Chapman be desired to bring in an Account of his charges for the defence of a suit against him in the prosecution of his Office (as Constable) against prophaness and immorality at which time this Society will take the same into consideracion so as no Officer in doing his duty may be discouraged.

Forasmuch as severall of the Constables of this City have been at great paines and cost in the execution of their Office some whereof are members of this Society, it is therefore ordered that such as are or shall be of this Society shall not pay quarteridge (during the time of their being in such Office) but only one shilling at their admittance.

Ordered that John Board do attend upon those Gentlemen in each parish of this City and acquaint them that this Society desires them to bring in their subscriptions for setting the poor children of this City to school against the 12th day of November next. [Adjourned to 4 p.m. on 12 November.]

[fo. 20]

Bristoll November the 12th 1700. Robt Yate Esquire in the Chair.
8,39,26,14,15,47,35,7,17/21,19,3,58,54,16,29,36,52.

Whereas Mr Clements did on the behalfe of the Parrish of St Augustines propose that their poor children might be set to school for that they should have sufficient subscrpions to carry it on, this Society desires Mr William Andrews, Mr Anthony Swymmer and Mr Thomas Clements that they will forthwith proceed therein.

Likewise Major Harper for the parrish of St Nicholas, Sir John Duddlestorne for the parrish of St Michaels, Mr Samuel Jacob for the parrish of St Johns, Mr Edward Skrine for the Castle precincts, did severally propose the same for their respective parrishes, and they are desired forthwith to proceed therein accordingly.

It is ordered that Mr Treasurer do give Mr Thomas Pen the Curate of St Nicholas one Guiney for reading prayers at the Lecture for Reformacion to the tenth day of Novembe and to pay the Clerk of said Church eight shillings and ninepence for candles to all saints day, it is likewise ordered that Mr Treasurer pay the Clerk of said Church thirty shillings per annum and the sextone twenty shillings per annum to commence from the 24th June last. [Adjourned to 4 p.m. on 26 November.]⁴¹

⁴¹ In addition to Robert Yate's name, John Duddlestorne's own signature is appended, presumably as chairman of the next meeting.

[fo. 21]

Bristol November 26th 1700. Sir John Duddlestorne in the Chair.
20,8,23,14,15,47,17,12/21,58,16,37,29,48,10,35.

Mr William Andrews, Mr Anthony Swymmer and Mr Thomas Clements are desired by this Society to request the parishioners of St Augustines that they will forthwith proceed to set their poor children to school. It is ordered by this Society that Mr Treasurer do give John Gifford five shillings for his attendance on this Society at their meetings. [Adjourned to 4 p.m. on 17 December.]

Bristol December 17th 1700. Sir John Duddlestorne in the Chair.
12,35,10,48,15/21,3,16,52

[Adjourned to 4 p.m. on 7 January.]

[fo. 22]

Bristol January 7th 1700[-01]. Thomas Edwards Esquire in the Chair.
43,14,47,48,46,8,4/21,3,22,29,9,52,15

Forasmuch as it hath been observed that the Constables and other inferior Officers of this City hath not been so diligent in their duty in the execution of their Office against prophaness and Immorality as they ought to be, and it being the humble opinion of this Society that such inconveniences would be much remedied if this Society were honoured with the presence and countenance of the Magistrates, for which reasons Sir John Duddlestorne, John Bachelor Esquire, Nathaniell Wade Esquire, Thomas Edwards Esquire, Messrs Peter Saunders, Richard Codrington, Abraham Elton, Arthur Bedford, Thomas Clements and Walter Chapman or the major part of them be appointed a Committe to wait upon Mr Mayor⁴² and Aldermen to desire their favour and presence at and countenance of this Society.

Mr Chapman according to an order of this Society on the 29th day October last hath this day brought in an Account of his disbursements in defence of the suit brought against him by Morrice Pritchard⁴³ amounting to £14 5s 6d it is ordered that the said Account be left with the Clerk till the next meeting of this Society and then be taken into consideracion.

It is ordered that John Board do attend upon the Gentlemen of this Society for their quarteridge and make a report thereof at the next meeting of this Society. [Adjourned to 4 p.m. on 14 January.]

⁴² The mayor for 1700–1 was Sir William Daines, the future Whig M.P. for Bristol 1702–10, whom one would have expected to be a keen supporter of the Society; one of his two daughters married into the Cary family (see also n.60).

⁴³ Pritchard, a yeoman, was convicted of profanely swearing three oaths in St James parish on the oath of Walter Chapman on 17 November 1699 (Bristol Record Office 04452(1), at back); in 1705 he was to be whipped up and down the High Street for two hours for a cheat (04449(2)).

[fo. 23]

Bristoll January 14th 1700[–01]. Thomas Edwards Esquire in the Chair.
36,43,52,15,8,14,48,11,47,38/21,19,58,54,55,16,9,39,27,20.

Mr Arthur Bedford, Mr John Bowman and Mr James Stewart are desired by this Society to request the parishioners of Temple that they will forthwith proceed to put their poor children to school.

Mr Thomas Bayly and Mr Onesiphorus Tyndall desires the same for the parish of Christ Church.

Forasmuch as the parish of All Saints, St Walburgh, St Ewins and St Leonards having but few poor people therein, this Society desires the Gentlemen of those parishes to bring in their subscriptions for putting the poor children of this Citty to school, and to collect the same and pay it in to the Treasurer of this Society in order that the same may be distributed to those parishes that have most occasion.⁴⁴

This Society being informed that the Lord Bishop⁴⁵ of this Diocess hath been pleased to signify his pleasure to allow five pounds per annum towards setting the poor children of this Citty to school, it is the request of this Society that a letter of thanks be written to his Lordship and therein to give him an Account of the Generall heads how this is to be applyed, and that his Lordship be desired to pay it in to the Treasurer of this Society to be applyed accordingly, and that Mr Cary and Mr Tayler⁴⁶ be desired to write to his Lordship accordingly.

Forasmuch as Mr Sloper⁴⁷ Chancellor of this Diocess hath proposed to give fourty shillings per annum as above, it is the request of this Society that thanks be returned as above, and that Mr Cary and Mr Tayler be desired to write Mr Sloper accordingly.

Forasmuch as severall parishes hath already set their poor children to school and others are intending so to do, it is the desire of this Society that those persons do bring in a list of those children that are already or shall be put to school with the names of their Mistresses and the weekly price for each child. [Adjourned to 4 p.m. on 11 February.]

⁴⁴ Apparently only All Saints ever contributed to support the others (see 3 June 1701), while St Leonards and St Werburghs are later reported to be ready to set their own children to school (25 February 1701).

⁴⁵ John Hall, Bishop of Bristol (1691–1709) and Master of Pembroke College, Oxford, is dubbed by the *D.N.B.* ‘the last Puritan bishop’. Established the Society for the Sons of the Clergy in Bristol in 1692. Gave £50 to the Incorporation of the Poor and then, in 1700, another £50 for Bibles for poor children when apprenticed. He denounced the playhouse from the pulpit (see item 20).

⁴⁶ Probably not one of the three Taylers who were members of the Society, but rather James Taylor, vicar of St Augustine’s, whose parish included the Cathedral precincts (see 3 June 1701).

⁴⁷ Charles Sloper, Chancellor of Bristol diocese 1695–1727. He later gave a rental worth £15 p.a. to the Corporation for the purchase of Bibles for distribution to the poor of the city.

[fo. 24]

Bristol February 11th 1700[–01]. Mr Arthur Bedford in the Chair.
8,14,48,10,31,47,34/21,16,9,36,43,13,29.

Mr Thomas Winstone, Edward Higgins and Walter Chapman are desired by this Society to request the parishioners of St James that they will forthwith proceed to set their poor children to school so farr as their subscrpions will admitt.

Messrs John Day, James Halledge, Edward Tocknell⁴⁸ and Robert Bodenham are desired by this Society to compleat their subscrpions and request the parishioners of St Stephens that they will forthwith proceed to set their poor children to school assoon as conveniently they can. [Adjourned to 4 p.m. on 25 February.]

[fo. 25]

Bristol February 25th 1700[–01]. John Bachelor in the Chair.
26,14,48,12,46/21,3,23,36,8

Messrs Whitehead, Whiteing and John Edwards are desired by this Society to compleat their subscrpions, and request the parishioners of St Phillip and Jacob that they will forthwith proceed to set their poor children to school so farr as their subscrpions will admitt.

St Mary Redcliffe the same as above. St Leonards ditto. St Stephens ditto. St Maryport ditto. St Walburgh ditto. [Adjourned to 4 p.m. on 11 March.]

[fo. 26]

Bristol March 11th 1700–1. Sir John Duddlestone in the Chair.
50,29,52,14,10,35,17/21,19,54,23,9,24,20

Ordered by this Society that Mr Codrington do give Mr Lovell the Curate of St Nicholas one Guiney for reading prayer at the Lecture for Reformacion, and to pay the Clerk of said Church thirty shillings and the sextone twenty shillings for one year sallary ending the 25th of this instant. [Adjourned to 4 p.m.on 8 April.]

[fo. 27]

Bristol Aprill 8th 1701. John Bachelor Esquire in the Chair.
35,48,11,47,34/3,5,20,52,14.

It is ordered that John Board do attend upon those Gents of this Society for their quarteridge (that have not paid it) and make a report thereof at their next meeting, and that he further request the Gents under written that they will please to appear next Summons, to bring with them their Severall Accounts of the subscrpions for setting poor children to

⁴⁸ A merchant and SMV master 1685–7, assessed as a gentleman at the head of the Key in 1696. Common councillor 1684–Jan. 1688 and October 1688–89, sheriff 1686–7, chamberlain 1698–1710. Poor Guardian for St Stephens in 1696.

school, with the names of the children taught and their charge disbursed to Lady day last.

Mr Samuell Jacob for St Johns
Mr John Day for St Stephens
Mr Edward Loyd for St Leonards
Mr Abraham Elton for St Walburgh
Mr Thomas Melton for St Ewins
Mr Richard Codrington for All Saints
Mr Pagott for St Mary Redcliffe
Mr Whitchurch for St Thomas
Mr Arthur Bedford for Temple
Sir John Duddlestone for St Michaels
Mr Thomas Clements for St Augustines
Mr Walter Chapman for St James
Mr Whitehead for St Phillips
Mr Skrine for Castle
Mr Edward Hackett for St Peters
Mr Curtis for St Maryport
Mr Arthur Tayler for St Nicholas
Mr Onesiphorus Tyndall for Christ Church

Mr Chapman producing a note of sundry disbursements to sundry persons that had been employed by members of this Society for discovering disorderly practices done and committed on severall Lords dayes, which had mett with very good effect, the charge amounting to thirty shillings and six pence, it is requested that Mr Codrington do repay him said money and the members of this Society are requested to continue the same for the future.

It haveing been observed by several members of this Society that the continual passing of the boates at Bathavon and the Gibb tends more to the prophanacion of the Lords day then for the conveniency of the inhabitants, and being informed that the Magistrates of this City have heretofore not only discountenanced, but prohibited it, it is requested that John Bachelor Esquire, Mr Richard Bayly, Mr Tyndall, Mr Chapman, Mr Bowman and Mr Stewart do attend Mr Mayor and Aldermen and desire their advice and orders therein. [Adjourned to 4 p.m. on 29 April.]

[fo. 28]

Bristoll April 29th 1701. Sir Thomas Day in the Chair.

10,35,7,56,17/19,54,9,43,48.

It is ordered that John Board do follow the former directions given him at the last meeting of this Society and make a report thereof at their next meeting. [Adjourned to 4 p.m. on 13 May.]

Bristoll May 13th 1701. Sir Thomas Day in the Chair.

35,7,46,17,34,38/21,19,9,50,14,10

Ordered that there be a book provided to enter the subscripions of each parish for setting the poor children to school with the names of the children taught for the satisfaction of the Benefactors and all others who shall be willing to peruse the same, and that Mr Arthur Bedford is desired by this Society to provide the abovemencioned book and to write the subscripions of each parish and the names of the children taught.

It is desired by this Society that Mr Onesiphorus Tyndall shall be Treasurer in the roome of Mr Richard Codrington a member of this Society lately deceased. [Adjourned to 4 p.m. on 3 June.]

[fo. 29]

Bristoll June 3rd 1701. Mr Richard Tayler in the Chair.
50,48,14,17/19,9,36,43.

Ordered that the thanks of this Society be returned to Mr Onesiphorus Tyndall for his readiness to undertake the office of Treasurer for this Society, and that he be desired to call on the Executor⁴⁹ of Mr Richard Codrington lately deceased for his Account in relation thereunto.

Ordered that the thanks of this Society be returned to Mr Arthur Bedford for his great care and trouble in provideing a book and entering the subscripions of each parish and the names of the children taught and that he is further desired by this Society to buy 12 small bookees and write a method in each book for keeping the Account of the benefactors names and children who are set to school in each parish, and that those Gentlemen in each parish be desired to finish their Account till Midsummer next and that Mr Treasurer is desired to reimburse Mr Bedford his charges for such bookes bought by him.

Ordered that the money given by the Bishop, Chancellor and All Saints parish, amounting to £16 per annum be applyed five pounds for St James, four pound for St Phillips, four pound for Temple and three pound for St Mary Redcliffe, and that the respective parishes be desired to put so many poor children to school as the same money will pay for. It is ordered by this Society that Sir Thomas Day, Mr Alderman Bachelor, Mr Thomas Edwards, Dr Read, Mr Arthur Bedford and Mr James Taylor be desired to returne my Lord Bishop thanks for his care in setting up the Lecture Sermons on each Sunday in the Evening at St Nicholas Church, and that they desire him to give order to continue the same for the future. [Adjourned to 4 p.m. on 25 June.]

[fo. 30]

Bristoll June 25th 1701. Mr Arthur Bedford in the Chair.
48,10,47/3,52,9

[Adjourned to 6 p.m. on 8 July.]

⁴⁹ Later identified as Mr Browning, presumably one of two Richard Brownings. One was a mercer (like Codrington) on the Bridge in 1696, the other lived in Pile Street, worth £600, and was a 'staunch churchman' on the Redcliffe vestry. One was a member of the Midsummer 1696 Grand Jury that congratulated Mayor Wallis (54) for his execution of the laws against profanity (printed copy in British Library 816 m.16 (28)).

Bristoll July 8th 1701. Mr Arthur Bedford in the Chair.
48,10,35,56,17,47,51,38/21,3,9,43,50,29,52,14

It is ordered by this Society that John Board do attend upon those Gentlemen of this Society for their quarteridge that have not paid it, and make a report thereof at the next meeting of this Society, and so successively the first summons after every quarter.

It is ordered by this Society that Mr Treasurer pay John Board twenty four shillings for his trouble in summoning this Society to their severall meetings.

It is ordered by this Society that Mr Treasurer do give Mr Lovell the Curate of St Nicholas one Guiney for his trouble in reading prayer at the Lectures for Reformacion.

It is ordered by this Society that Sir John Duddlestone and Mr Alderman Bachelor do request Mr Gough and Mr Burgess to collect the subscriptions of All Saints for setting poor children to school due at Midsummer last. [Adjourned to 4 p.m. on 12 August.]

[fo. 31]

Bristoll August 12th 1701. Mr Arthur Bedford in the Chair.
14,48/42,9,52

It is ordered by this Society that Mr Treasurer do give John Gifford two shillings six pence for his attendance at their severall meetings. [Adjourned to 6 p.m. on 19 August.]

Bristoll August 19th 1701. Mr Thomas Edwards in the Chair.
14,48,35,17/22,42,9,52

In pursuance of an order of this Society, Mr Tyndall the present Trasurer hath waited on the Executor of Mr Richard Codrington (lately deceased) from whom he hath received his Account in loose papers, it is therefore ordered that the Clerk of this Society do take said papers to form an Account that it may be entered in the book.⁵⁰

Mr Walter Chapman haveing brought his Account (from Lady Day last, and ending at Midsummer last) of what money he have received and paid for setting poor children to school in the parish of St James, this Society do approve said Account and ordered that such approbacion be signed by the Chairman and that Mr Chapman be desired to make a copy of said Account and signe it and to pay the ballance thereof to Mr Treasurer.

This Society being informed that the Widow Patrick living in the Barton in St James exposes her fruit publickly to sale on the Lords day, and although forewarned by the Constables not to do it, it is the humble opinion of this Society that the Magistrates be acquainted herewith, that she may be dealt with according to law.

Whereas there was an order made the 8th Aprill last by this Society that Mr Richard Codrington should pay Mr Walter Chapman 30s 6d, being

⁵⁰ See fo. 33 below.

money necessarily by him laid out for discovering disorderly practices committed on the Lords day, and Mr Codrington dying before it was paid it is ordered that the present Treasurer do pay it. [Adjourned to 6 p.m. on 26 August.]

[fo. 32]

Bristoll August 26th 1701. Mr Thomas Edwards in the Chair.
52,50,14,48,10,35,38/21,19,3,22,42,9,43

Whereas there was an order made by this Society at their last meeting concerning the Widow Patrick exposing her fruit for sale on the Lords day, it's now ordered that it be continued untill their next meeting that application may be made to the Magistrates for some redress in that matter, and that Sir John Duddlestone, John Bachelor Esquire and Mr Thomas Edwards do attend the Mayor and Aldermen for that purpose.

Whereas there was a subscription of severall persons in the parish of All Saints for setting poor children to school, which remained in the hands of Mr Richard Codrington (lately deceased) and the same having not been found among the papers received from Mr Browning his executor, Mr Treasurer together with Mr Bedford are desired to wait upon Mr Browning to procure the same to be delivered to them so as it may be brought to the next meeting. This Society being informed that the Boars head near the Colledge Green is a house that suffers great disorders by peoples tippling there at unseasonable houres, it is the request of this Society that the cheife Constable of St Michaels Ward, with Mr Richard Hort cheife Constable of the Castle precincts, and Mr Thomas Lewis cheife Constable of St James do visit said house and observe what disorderly persons are there, taking their names and give account thereof to the Magistrates.

Forasmuch as it is generally observed that the multiplicity of Alehouses in this City have been a great encouragement to debauchery, it is therefore the humble opinion of this Society that the Magistrates be acquainted therewith and be desired that the number of those Alehouses be lessened and reduced in such manner as they in their judgements shall think fitt, and that Sir John Duddlestone, John Bachelor Esquire and Mr Thomas Edwards be desired to attend the Magistrates with this representation.

Whereas the Clergy of this City in order to encourage the Reformacion desired and intended by this Society not only offered but have for 18 months last past bestowed their labours in preaching a Reformacion sermon weekly on the Lords day and its hoped with good success, this Society therefore desires that hearty thanks be given them for their great paines and labour in so good and pious a Work, and Dr Read and Mr Bedford being present are desired to returne them thanks accordingly, and it is the humble opinion of this Society that the same should be continued but forasmuch as the Lord Bishopp is now in Towne we humbly conceive that his Lordship upon consultation with his Clergy will be the best Judge how and at what times the same may be continued so as it may not become burdensome to the Clergy and yet the good work of Reformacion carryed on, and Sir Thomas Day, Sir John Duddlestone and John Bachelor Esquire and Mr Thomas Edwards or

any 3 of them are desired to attend his Lordship with this their humble opinion and crave his farther advice and aid in the supporting and encouraging the Reformacion so much wished for and desired by this Society. [Adjourned to 6 p.m. on 16 September.]

[fo. 33]

Anno 1700

The Executors of Mr Richard Codrington are Debtors.			
		£	s d
October	To money received by Mr Richard Codrington	4	5
15th	To money received per ditto	2	2 6
29th	To money received per ditto	2	17 6
November 12th	To money received per ditto	2	2
26th	To money received per ditto		10
January 14th	To money received per ditto	3	11 3
February 12th	To money received per ditto	1	
March 11th	To money received per ditto		15
12th	To money received per ditto	1	4
19th	To money received per ditto		13
26th 1701	To money received per ditto		03
29th	To money received per ditto		2
		£ 19	5 3
Contra Credit			
		£	s d
April 30th			
By cash paid John Board for summoning the Society		-	11 -
By cash paid Mr Tyndall for 2 bookes		-	8 -
By cash paid for a halfe hour glass		-	- 6
July 10th			
By cash paid John Jayne 1/4 yeares salary		1	- -
8ber 30th			
By cash paid John Board summoning the Society		1	- -
By cash paid John Jayne 1/4 yeares salary		1	- -
9ber 12th			
By cash paid Mr Pen		1	1 6
By cash paid Mr Curtis for candles at the Lectures		-	8 9
By cash paid Mr Bonny ⁵¹ for 1000 summons		-	12 -
By cash paid John Gifford		-	5 -
Janry 10th			
By cash paid John Jayne 1/4 yeares salary		1	- -
Aprill 3d 1701			
By cash paid Mr Curtis the Clerk of St Nicholas Church		1	10 -
By cash paid the Sextone		1	- -
By cash paid the Curate		1	1 6
By cash received per Mr Onesiphorus Tyndall		8	5 9
By allowance	-	1	3
		19	5 3

⁵¹ William Bonny, Bristol's first permanent printer, came from London in 1695 and died c. 1718. He also printed item 16.

[fo. 34]

Bristol September 16th 1701. Sir John Duddlestone in the Chair.
10,35,17,47,51/21,9,43,14,48.

Whereas there was an order made by this Society at their last meeting to deferr Goody Patricks business (concerning her selling fruit on the Lords day) untill the next meeting, which is now ordered to be continued until the 30th Instant.

It is ordered by this Society that Mr Treasurer and Mr Bedford be desired to wait upon my Lord Bishop and Mr Chancellor for their subscrpions towards setting the poor children of this City to school.

It is the request of this Society that Sir John Duddlestone, John Bachelor Esquire and Mr Chapman be desired to speak with Mr John Day Mr James Halledge and Mr Robert Bodenham to know what they have done about putting the poor children of their parish⁵² to school and to make a report thereof at their next meeting. [Adjourned to 6 p.m. on 30 September.]

Bristol September 30th 1701. Sir Thomas Day in the Chair.
10,35,17,47,38/19,21,23,43,8

[Adjourned to 6 p.m. on 21 October.]

[fo. 35]

Bristol October 21st 1701. Mr Thomas Edwards in the Chair.
14,35,17,47/22,23,43,52.

[Adjourned to 6 p.m. on 4 November.]

Bristol November 4th 1701. Mr Thomas Edwards in the Chair.
43,15,14,10,47/19,21,22,42,23.

Mr Walter Chapman having brought in his Account (from Midsummer last and ending at Michaelmas last) of what money he have received and paid for setting poor children to school in the parish of St James, this Society do approove said Account and ordered that such approbacion be signed by the Chairman, and that Mr Chapman be desired to make a copy of said Account and signe it and Mr Treasurer to pay him 3s 5d the ballance thereof and also sixteene shillings being money disbursed by him per order of this Society. [Adjourned to 6 p.m. on 2 December.]

[fo. 36]

Bristol December 16th 1701. Sir Thomas Day in the Chair.
14,46,47,34/19,9,43,52

It is ordered by this Society that Mr Treasurer do pay John Board thirteen shillings and six pence for his attendance and trouble in summoning the members of this Society to their severall meetings.
[Adjourned to 6 p.m. on 13 January.]

⁵² i.e. St Stephens.

Bristoll January 13th 1701[–02]. Sir Thomas Day in the Chair.
52,14,48,35,47/19,42,9,23,43.

The question being put (to the vote) whether what Mr Lovell hath already received should be a sufficient reward for the paines he have taken at the Reformacion sermons, it was carried in the affirmative.
It is ordered by this Society that John Board do request the Gents of each parrish that they will please to appear at the next meeting of this Society and bring with them their severall Accounts of the subscrpctions for setting poor children to school with the names of the children taught and their charge disbursed to Christmas last. [Adjourned to 6 p.m. on 17 February.]

[fo. 37]

Bristoll February 17th 1701[–02]. Sir John Duddlestone in the Chair.
14,48,10/21,23,36,43

It is ordered by this Society that John Board do request those Gents in each parrish that have the care of placeing poor children to school will please to make up their Account of what money they have received and paid in those severall parishes for that use to the 25th day of March next in order to be examined at the next meeting of this Society and also that John Board deliver a copy of this order to the Gentlemen in each parrish. [Adjourned to 6 p.m. on 31 March.]⁵³

Bristoll March 31st 1702. Sir Thomas Day in the Chair.

14,48,10,47/19,21,23,8,52.

This day Sir John Duddlestone brought in his Account for placeing poor children to school in the parrish of St Michaels there being due to him to ballance 6s which was paid him by Mr Treasurer, also Mr Arthur Taylor brought in his Account for placeing poor children to school in the parish of St Nicholas there being due to the said parrish to ballance £1 11s which remains in his hands.

This day Mr Onesiphorus Tyndall brought in his Account for placeing poor children to school in the parrish of Christ Church there being due to him to ballance 5s 10d which summe he is allowed on his Accompt.

This day Mr Walter Chapman brought in his Account for placeing poor children to school in the parrish of St James, there being due to the parrish seaven pence which was paid to Mr Treasurer. [Adjourned to 6 p.m. on 21 April.]

[fo. 38]

Bristoll Aprill 21st 1702. Sir Thomas Day in the Chair.
8,46,47,34,36/19,42,22,43,52,10

[Adjourned to 6 p.m. on 12 May.]

Bristoll May 12th 1702. Sir John Duddlestone in the Chair.

10,56,47/21,19,9,43

⁵³ Thomas Day also signs his name, presumably as chairman of the next meeting.

This day Mr Henry Sampson brought in his Accompt for placeing poor children to school in the Castle precincts there being due to ballance 15s 8d which remains in the hands of Mr Edward Skrine. [Adjourned to 6 p.m. on 9 June.]

[fo. 39]

Bristoll June 9th 1702. Mr Abraham Elton in the Chair.
48,10,35,47,23,9,36,52

It is ordered by this Society that Mr Treasurer do give the Clerk of St Nicholas Church twenty shillings and the sextone fifteene shillings for their attendance at the Lectures for the Reformacion of manners ending the 25th March 1702. [Adjourned to 6 p.m. on 23 June.]

Bristoll June 23 1702. Mr Arthur Bedford in the Chair.
14,35,46/9,20,43.

Ordered by this Society that Sir John Duddlestone, John Bachelor Esquire and Mr Arthur Bedford be desired to wait upon the Mayor⁵⁴ and Aldermen and recommend to their consideration the suppressing of stage playes Musick houses and such like irregularityes dureing the approaching fayr.

Ordered by this Society that Mr Edward Skrine be desired to speak with Mr William Burges to bring in his Account of what money he have collected in the parish of All Saints for setting poor children to school. [Adjourned to 6 p.m. on 30 June.]

[fo. 40]

Bristoll June 30th 1702. Sir John Duddlestone in the Chair.
52,10,35,46,47,34/21,58,9,25,23,43.

[Adjourned to 6 p.m. on 11 August.]

Bristoll August 11th 1702. Sir John Duddlestone in the Chair.
48,10,47,14/21,23,36,52,9

This Society having this day received from the Society for Reformacion of Manners in the City of London⁵⁵ by the hands of Mr Arthur Bedford severall books and papers which we believe will be of great use for the community of mankind, it is ordered that Mr Bedford returne the thanks of this Society for the same.

Ordered that the papers intituled an earnest perswasive to the serious observance of the Lords day and the book intituled an earnest exhortation to housekeepers to sett up the worship of God in their familys be forthwith printed one thousand of each sort and when printed Mr Bedford be desired to employ some trusty person for the delivering

⁵⁴ The mayor for 1701–2 was Sir John Hawkins, a brewer, later a keen supporter of Temple charity schools.

⁵⁵ See the introduction and below items 14–15.

the books (intituled an earnest exhortation to housekeepers) to most of the housekeepers in this City,⁵⁶ and the next week following the papers intituled an earnest perswasive to the serious observance of the Lords day be delivered in the same manner. [Adjourned to 6 p.m. on 1 September.]

[fo. 41]

Bristol October 13th 1702. Sir John Duddlestone in the Chair.
15,10,46,48/21,9,52,43.

Mr Arthur Bedford makes a report to this Society that he hath caused to be printed and dispersed those bookees ordered to be printed at the last meeting of this Society, it is now ordered that Mr Treasurer do pay for the printing of the said bookees and also that Mr Bedford be desired to cause to be printed a book intituled the *Vindication* of those who informes the Magistrates against immorality and Mr Treasurer is desired to pay for the same when printed.

Ordered that John Board desire those Gents in each parish that have the care of placeing poor children to school will be pleased to make up their Account of what money they have received and paid in their severall parishes for that use to the 29th September last to be examined at the next meeting of this Society. [Adjourned to 6 p.m. on 27 October.]

Bristol October 27th 1702. Sir John Duddlestone in the Chair.
43,10,47,34/21,52,14,48.

This day Mr Walter Chapman brought in his Account for placeing poor children to school in the parish of St James there being due to him to ballance thirty one shillings and tenpence which ballance Mr Treasurer is desired to pay. [Adjourned to 6 p.m. on 24 November.]

[fo. 42]

Bristol November 24th 1702. Sir John Duddlestone in the Chair.
10,34,48/21,9,52,43.

It is ordered by this Society that Mr Treasurer do give Mr Yates the Curate of St Nicholas thirty shillings for reading prayers at the Lectures for Reformacion.

This day Sir John Duddlestone brought in his Account for placeing poor children to school in the parish of St Michaels there being due to him to ballance forty shillings which summe Mr Treasurer is desired to pay.

This day Mr Whitehead brought in his Account for placeing poor children to school in the parish of St Phillip and Jacob there being due to him to ballance nineteen shillings and seaven pence which summe Mr Treasurer is desired to pay. [Adjourned to 6 p.m. on 15 December.]

Bristol December 15th 1702. Sir Thomas Day in the Chair.
47,34,10/19,21,9,43.

⁵⁶ One thousand copies would not have sufficed to reach most households in a city of c. 25,000 people, but perhaps only the more substantial householders were envisaged.

This day Mr Arthur Bedford brought in his Account for placeing poor children to school in the parish of Temple there being due to him to ballance two pounds seventeene shillings which summe Mr Treasurer is desired to pay. [Adjourned to 6 p.m. on 23 March.]

[fo. 43]

Bristoll Aprill 6th 1703. Sir John Duddlestone in the Chair.
48,14,15,10,7,46,35,43/21,19,3,23,29,36,52,47.

It is ordered by this Society that Mr Treasurer do pay to Mr John Batchelor pewterer⁵⁷ forty shillings and to Mr William Righstone⁵⁸ twenty shillings for two yeares candles burned in St Nicholas Church at the Reformacion Sermons and also to give the Curate of St Nicholas thirty shillings for reading prayers at the Lectures for Reformacion to Lady Day last past.

It is ordered by this Society that Mr Treasurer do pay Mr Walter Chapman the summe of two pounds eight shillings and six pence it being the ballance of his Account for placeing poor children to school in the parish of St James to Christmas last.

Whereas since the constituting of this Society for Reformacion of manners and at their request by the assistance and direction of the present Lord Bishop of Bristol the Clergy of this City did every Lords day for several months preach in the Evening a Reformacion Sermon at St Nicholas Church in this City, gratis, and for about twelve months past continue preaching said Sermon once a fortnight, and this Society being well sattisfyed of the good effect thereof and being very desirous to perpetuate so good a work and fearing it may be discontinued without some small encouragement and to the end it may be continued for ever, we do recommend to Sir Thomas Day, Sir John Duddlestone, Mr Alderman Bachelor and Mr Sheriff Elton to procure subscrpctions and make report at the next meeting of this Society. [Adjourned to 6 p.m. on 4 May.]

[fo. 44]

Bristoll September 28th 1703. Sir John Duddlestone in the Chair.
15,14,10/21,9,52.

It is ordered by this Society that Mr Treasurer do pay Mr Watts the Curate of St Nicholas twenty shillings it being for reading prayers for the Lecture sermons for Reformacion of Manners at St Nicholas Church to the 29th Instant. [Adjourned to 6 p.m. on 1 October.]

Bristoll October 1st 1703. Sir John Duddlestone in the Chair.
52,43,9,25,15/21,19,54,23,36.

It is ordered by this Society that Mr Treasurer do pay the sextone of St Nicholas Church fifteene shillings to Michaelmas last for his trouble in ringing and tolling the Bell for the Lecture Sermons for Reformacion of Manners. [Adjourned to 6 p.m. on 28 October.]

⁵⁷ of Baldwin Street in 1696.

⁵⁸ A William Rishton mercer of St Nicholas was a common councillor 1699–1702.

[fo.45]

Bristol November 2nd 1703. Sir John Duddlestone in the Chair.
52,14,48,10/21,58,42,9.

It is ordered by this Society that Mr Treasurer do give the Clerk of St Nicholas twenty shillings for his attendance at the Lecture Sermons for Reformacion of manners to Lady day next and also that Mr Treasurer do pay for 4lbs of candles every Lords day when the Lecture Sermons for Reformacion is preached dureing this Winter and also that Mr Treasurer do give John Jayne the Clerk of this Society twenty shillings for his attendance to Michaelmas last. [Adjourned to 6 p.m. on 30 November.]⁵⁹

Bristol March 20th 1704[–5]. Sir Thomas Day in the Chair.
56,10,6/19,21,14,52.

It is ordered by this Society that Mr Treasurer do pay Mr Watts the Curate of St Nicholas seaventeen shillings it being for reading prayers at the Lecture Sermons for Reformacion of Manners at St Nicholas Church to the 25th day of March Instant which with two Guineys paid him by Mr Treasurer the 13th December last will make in all the summe of three pounds for one year and half due the 25th Instant, and also that Mr Treasurer do pay the Clerk of St Nicholas twenty shillings due the 25th Instant and also that Mr Treasurer do pay the sextone of St Nicholas ten shillings which with twenty shillings paid by him 19th December last makes in all thirty shillings due the 25th Instant, and also that Mr Treasurer do pay John Jayne the Clerk of this Society ten shillings to the 25th Instant, and also that Mr Treasurer do adjust with Mr Edward Higgins to the 25th Instant. [Adjourned to 6 p.m. on 17 April]

[fo. 46]

Bristol Aprill 17th 1705. The Honourable Colonel Yate in the Chair.
52,56,14,43/58,19,21,3,9.

[Adjourned to 6 p.m. on 15 May.]

2.

[SPCK Minute Book I, 1698–1706. 19 October 1699.] Mr Shute⁶⁰ reports that one of the Pastoral Letters was sent to Bristol where a Society for Reformation is set up by the Mayor, Aldermen, Deputy Lieutenants and Principle Inhabitants.

3.

[John Cary,⁶¹ *An Account of the Proceedings of the Corporation of Bristol in execution of the Act of Parliament for the better employing*

⁵⁹ In fact a sixteen month gap then follows; that this is not just a result of missing records is proved by the retrospective payments made at the next meeting.

⁶⁰ Henry Shute, Treasurer of the SPCK 1700–22 and a London clergyman, with a brother living in Bristol. A low churchman and regular correspondent of Bedford's, he was distantly related to John Shute, first Viscount Barrington, who married the daughter of Sir William Daines (see n. 42): L.W. Cowie, *Henry Newman: An American in London 1708–43* (1956), p. 159 (I owe this reference to the kindness of Tim Hitchcock).

⁶¹ For Cary and the Incorporation of the Poor see introduction and H.T. Lane, 'The Life and Writings of John Cary' (Bristol M.A. thesis, 1932).

and maintaining the poor of that city (London, 1700); extract from pp. 19–20.] The Success hath answered our Expectation; we are freed from Beggars, our old People are comfortably provided for; our Boys and Girls are educated to Sobriety and brought up to delight in Labour; our young Children are well lookt after, and not spoiled by the neglect of ill Nurses; and the Face of our City is so changed already, that we have great reason to hope these young Plants will produce a virtuous and laborious Generation, with whom Immorality and Prophaneness may find little Incouragement; nor does our hopes appear to be groundless, for among Three hundred Persons now under our Charge within Doors, there is neither Cursing nor Swearing, nor profane Language to be heard, though many of them were bred up in all Manner of Vices, which neither *Bridewell* nor Whippings could fright them from, because, returning to their bad Company for want of Employment, they were rather made worse than bettered by those Corrections; whereas the Change we have wrought on them is by fair means. We have a *Bridewell*, *Stocks* and *Whipping-Post* always in their sight, but never had occasion to make use of either.

4.

[SPCK File I. Original Letters, no. 2.] Arthur Bedford⁶² to John Chamberlayne.⁶³ Bristol November the 27th 1699. I received your kind and Christian letter, and shall be alwayes ready as in duty bound to put a stop to the growth of Prophaneness and promote the Christian Religion by those methods you write of. I am highly sensible of the honour the Society you mention hath done in nominating me to be a member, and shall be very desirous of holding a correspondence with them, and whatever instructions I receive from them, I shall prosecute to the utmost of my power. We are very hearty in this city in putting the laws in execution against immorality and prophaneness, the Magistrates are very zealous and encourage informers and they have chosen the best constables that the city do afford, and there are some lay societyes erecting for reformation, and we are already sensible of the good effects of such an undertaking. Here is one thing wanting (viz) a monthly meeting of the Clergy to consider how far they may be instrumentall herein. Twas begun about 3 months ago to my great satisfaction, and afterwards unhappily discontinued. I have some hopes of reviving the same again, and for this end desire you would send me 20 of those papers which give an account of the meeting of the Clergy in Bedfordshire. So hoping God will bless you and me, and give us success in such a work as this which conduces so much for his glory, I shall heartily engage in it and am, Your most affectionate Brother and Servant, Arthur Bedford.

5.

[SPCK File I. Original Letters, no. 37.] Arthur Bedford to John Chamberlayne.

Bristol February the 7th 1699–1700. Sir, I was out of Town all this week upon urgent business and came not home untill last night, when I

⁶² See introduction and notes on SRM members no. 9.

⁶³ First Secretary of the SPCK.

received your Letter, in which you were pleased to give me an account of the three main branches of your Society, to be carried on by a frequent meeting of the Clergy. I formerly received by Mr Shute 6 papers giving an account of the meeting of the Clergy in Bedfordshire, with proposalls, rules and means for erecting of lending libraryes. We had about 4 months ago a very good prospect of a monethly meeting of the Clergy in this city, and severall together with my self were very hearty in it. We had one meeting, but it was interrupted by one Mr Cary⁶⁴ a city minister, who vehemently opposed it, to the wonder of all that knew him and stands resolved not to come among us. Since which time, I have laboured as much as I can to bring it about again, that as many may meet as are hearty for it, and others may stay away, and am now in hopes of accomplishing my design, when I will communicate your letter, and you shall hath their joynt answer to it. If you have anything for me, I desire it may be sent to Mr Samuel Sprint a bookseller at the sign of the Bell in Little Brittain, to be sent from thence to Mr Lewis,⁶⁵ a Bookseller here in Town. As to the design of educating poor children in this city, we have made a very considerable progress. We had first an Act of Parliament for building Hospitals, and houses of correction, and for the better employing and relief of the poor, by which means we had two in particular built, the one capable of containing 150 boys and the other near as many Maids, they are employed most part of the day in weaving and spinning etc., and a mistress is allowed a weekly salary to teach them all to read and say their catechism, and such prayers as are fit for them, and they all publickly joyn in prayers to God every morning and night, and such children as become chargeable to the city are sent thither, where they are maintained for their labour and educated with a sense of religion and I doubt not but we shall be sensible of the good effects thereof. I will be ready to send you as much as I can in the other particulars you mentioned and when anything occurs worthy your notice, you shall have a faithfull account thereof from your most affectionate and humble servant Arthur Bedford.

6.

[Bristol Record Office 04452(1) fo. 71.] Grand Jury presentment, 21 February 1700. To the Right Worshipful John Bachelor⁶⁶ Esquire Mayor and the Aldermen his Majesties Justices of the Peace for the City and County of the City of Bristol. The humble presentment of the Grand Inquest at the Generall Quarter Sessions of the Peace holden for the said City and County begun the ninth day of January in the Eleaventh year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord the King William the Third over England and by adjournment continued to this present one and twentieth day of February in the same year. When wee consider the goodness of Almighty God in putteing into the heart of our Most Gratiouis King to

⁶⁴ Thomas Cary. See notes on SRM members no. 13.

⁶⁵ George Lewis (b. c.1668, freed 1691, d. 1709) had a bookshop in Broad Street.

⁶⁶ See notes on SRM members no. 3.

countenance and Encourage Religion and Vertue by commanding the Execution of the good wholesome Laws of this Kingdom for the Suppressing Prophaneness and Immorality as by his late Royall and Gracious Proclamation published in reference thereunto appears, Wee are bound to give him most hearty thanks for the same and likewise so to render thanks to you our Worthy Magistrates for your Zealous endeavours and great care to put the said Laws into Execution pursuant to his Majesties Proclamation and has been particularly made known to us by the charge given us at the opening of this Session. And in order thereunto we have endeavoured according to the Station we are in, and the Expectation of this Worshipfull Bench, to contribute our utmmost assistance that all obstinate offenders that have come under our Cognizance might be brought to open and exemplary punishment. And we doe humbly desire that your Worshippers will countenance and assist the Constables of this City in their respective Offices and Wards for that purpose.

7.

[SPCK Abstract Letter Book (CR1/01) 1699–1701⁶⁷ no. 77.] Mr Bedford of Bristol to Mr Chamberlayne. April 10th 1700. That his endeavours to promote a Society of the Clergy have been ineffectual and therefore has joyned himself to a Society for Reformation in Bristol, consisting of about 50 of the cheif Inhabitants. Complains that the Taverns refuse to open their doors to the Constables on the Lords Day and at other unseasonable houres, and desires to know what measures the Societyes for Reformation⁶⁸ pursue on the like occasions. As a meanes of Propagating Christian Knowledge he proposes the promoting the study of the Hebrew Language, the neglect whereof hath given the Jews occasion to undermine Christianity and to buy up all the books of Oriental Learning, that we might be destitute of weapons to use against them. Hee proposes likewise the suppressing of prophane Songs and Ballads and dispersing Hymns with easy Tunes composed to them. If the Society approves of these proposalls he will further signifie wherein he may be capable of serveing them.

8.

[SPCK Abstract Letter Book (CR1/01) 1699–1701, no. 120.] Mr Bedford of Bristol to Mr Chamberlayne. June 17 1700. That he had received the Packett; had communicated our designe to the Society for Reformation, who being in their Infancy refused to joyn as yett for fear of Clogging themselves too hard at first, and has communicated our last letter to others and will do it to the Bishop.⁶⁹ He concluded his Letter with an Account of what is done by the Guardians of the Poor of Bristol.

⁶⁷ Most letters to the SPCK of this period only survive in the form of these abstracted versions and there is a gap even in the abstract letters between 1701 and 1708.

⁶⁸ For the London Societies for the Reformation of Manners see introduction.

⁶⁹ See n. 45.

9.

[SPCK Abstract Letter Book (CR1/01) 1699–1701, no. 150.] Mr Bedford of Bristol to Mr Chamberlayne. August 19th 1700. Refers to Mr Shute for an Account of what is done at Bristol. That his proposall of Erecting Schools hath met with great opposition from the Society for Reformation. That his brother Read⁷⁰ will be hearty in his correspondence but knows not what to say concerning Mr Cary.

10.

[SPCK Abstract Letter Book (CR1/01) 1699–1701, no. 226.] Mr Bedford from Bristol. December 24: 1700. Sends an Account of the Method the Clergy hath taken in that City to preach in their Turns every Lords day against immorality and Prophaneness, and that the Bishop is highly pleased with it. Desires the Society to make application to the Bishop that the same method be continued. Dr Reed and Mr Cary have excused themselves from entering into the Correspondency, instead of whom he recommends Sir John Duddlestone,⁷¹ who is desirous of the Honour. That Mr Keith⁷² had noe successe there. That the designs of Schools succeeds well, subscriptions being raised sufficient for the whole number of Poor children, except in three Parishes who have promised to take care of their own Poor. He suggests the reasons why part of the Instrument relating to the Catechism⁷³ hath been omitted and what methods Sir John Duddlestone tells him will be used to make amends for it. That he will Account for what can be done in relation to the Plantations, at present the Schools take up their whole thoughts. In the close he proposes to send his thoughts in relation to the reduceing of the Quakers to the Comunion of the Church and hopes to be in London this next summer.

11.

[SPCK Abstract Letter Book (CR1/01) 1699–1701, no. 229.] Mr Bedford of Bristol to Mr Chamberlayne. 8th January 1700/1. Imparts his thoughts about bringing over the Quakers and says that the reason of Mr

⁷⁰ Dr John Read. See notes on SRM members no. 42. As Bedford had married Christian Read, with John Read as bondsman for their licence, they were probably brothers-in-law, though brother may just mean fellow clergyman, as in item 4.

⁷¹ See notes on SRM members no. 21.

⁷² Rev. George Keith, a former Quaker, travelled Britain and the American colonies and wrote extensively against the Quakers. He visited Bristol in 1699 and 1700 and sought, with Bedford's support, to engage the Quakers in public debate.

⁷³ The Incorporation of the Poor had also run into problems designing a non-denominational catechism. A Tory attack on the Incorporation in 1711 alledged, with heavy sarcasm, that 'At last they agreed on a more infallible Way, it seems, by requesting a *Divine* of the Town to compose a *Form* for them, which he accordingly did. If the Piece does not speak the Author, please to know, 'twas the Reverend Mr T.C. [i.e. Thomas Cary]. But it was to pass the Judgement of a *Person Learned in the Law* [presumably Nathaniel Wade, SRM member no. 53, an Independent in religion] before it went to the Press, who it seems lop'd off several Branches, and being an Enemy to Forms in general, thought, I suppose, if there must be an Evil, the less the better.' (Anon., *Some Considerations offered to the citizens of Bristol relating to the Corporation for the poor in the said city*, 1711, p.6.)

Keith's unsuccessfulness is because the clergy do not pursue the victory in his absence. Wishes that the Archbishop were applied to to enjoyne the clergy to conferre with the Quakers, as he has done already about the Papists, suggests several Rules to that purpose, which see in the Letter at large. Gives his reasons why such a method might probably succeed vitz. 1. Because it has succeeded in the plantations. 2dly because some of the Cheif Quakers are grown more sociable etc. 3rdly because Wm Penn is absent and 4thly because of the Great divisions among them.⁷⁴ Says that Sir John Duddlestone has received the Societye's letter and laid it before the Clergy⁷⁵ and the Society for Reformation, which last were mightily affected with it. They are soe taken up with collections for schools that little is to be expected from them (he says) towards the designs in America etc. Lastly complains of the Great Ignorance and Atheism in Wales and of the Contempt of the Clergy occasioned by the small provisions for them and recommends it to the consideration of the Society.⁷⁶

12.

[SPCK Abstract Letter Book (CR1/01) 1699–1701, no. 231.] Sir John Duddlestone of Bristol to Mr Chamberlayne. 8 January 1700/1. Says that he has communicated the Society's letter to the clergy and to their Society for Reformation of manners who return their thanks. Gives a large Account of the great benefit the City of Bristol has received from the late erected Workhouses in that place, of their provisions for all sorts of poor, and what an Influence this has upon the Lives and Manners of the Vulgar etc.

13.

[SPCK Abstract Letter Book (CR1/01) 1699–1701, no. 281.] Mr Arthur Bedford from Bristoll to Mr Chamberlayne. 14 Aprill 1701. Says that the Society for Reformation has ordered him before the Receipt of ours to communicate some better methods for preventing the abuses of the Lords Day,⁷⁷ which shall be shortly sent, and a full answer to all the Points in the Societye's Letters, of which he will impart the contents to Sir J. Duddlestone, Dr Read and Mr Cary.

14.

[SPCK Abstract Letter Book (CR1/01) 1699–1701, no. 293 together with fuller abstract printed in E. McClure, *A Chapter in English Church History* (1888), pp. 335–6.] Mr Arthur Bedford of Bristoll to the

⁷⁴ William Penn, founder of Pennsylvania, was the son of a Bristol-born admiral and had married the daughter of a leading Bristol Quaker, Thomas Callowhill, after extensive stays in Bristol. 'Great divisions' probably refer to the continued trouble caused the Bristol and national leadership by William Rogers of Bristol, leading figure in the so-called 'Wilkinson-Story' dispute.

⁷⁵ This may imply that a meeting for the Bristol clergy had been established (see items 4–5, 14) or may refer to the Society for the Clergy and Sons of the Clergy, founded by Bishop Hall in 1692, but most likely it refers to the meetings of the clergy to coordinate the Reformation sermons at St Nicholas (see SRM minutes for 16 April 1700).

⁷⁶ In 1708–10 Bedford, Duddlestone and Bachelor, all SPCK correspondents, obtained grants from the Corporation and the Society of Merchant Venturers of £20 each for lending libraries for the Welsh clergy and organised the shipment of books to Wales.

⁷⁷ There is no sign of this order in the SRM minutes.

Secretary. 3 May 1701. Desires to know what methods have been taken by the Society for Reformation of manners⁷⁸ to prevent Boys from playing in the streets on the Lords day and men from spending their time idly on the Change, in the Feilds or else where in Divine Service. Wishes that the Society for Reformation in London did hold a Correspondence with all the others in England and Wales in order to carry on the work the better. In answer to the Society's letter of the 11 April, He says that charity schools goe on very successfully in their city, that subscriptions are made everywhere, even in parishes that have no poor of their own, that the Bishop has subscribed £5 and the Chancellor⁷⁹ 40s. That the workhouses are very regularly maintained, that the children amounting to 250 are taught the Principles of their Religion, to read etc. and obliged to frequent public prayers twice every day, that there is a Society of the Clergy in Bristol⁸⁰ and others in the counties of Gloucester and Somersett. That they have 3 Monthly Sacraments in their City, at the Cathedral St Nicholas and St Philips. That there are no Libraries lately erected among them nor likely, the Income of the Clergy being generally mean, excepting the Preferments in the Cathedral, which being in the Lord Keeper's gift are generally bestowed on such as are non-resident. That there is but one Papist in the City, and he a very sober Person. That since Mr Keith was there, there have been no Converts from Quakerism: the reasons of which are, That he has not been Seconded and that the Quakers having been alarmed, make it their Business to hand about some of their subtlest Writers as *Barclay's Apology, Dell's Works, The Truth of God held by Quakers*, etc. but especially by helping new Converts to good Matches. That the Society for Reformation continues still, but visibly decreases. That they have set up a Weekly Sacrament [sermon?] at St Nicolas against Immorality, and that their Magistrats are very Zealous, etc. He reckons their Discouragements under these 4 Heads. 1. The Defect in our law. 2. The frequent Aspersions against Informers. 3. Public Funds to fee Council against Informers. 4. The removing Causes to the King's Bench, etc. In order to obviate these he says, that the Magistrates resolve to conceal the Names of Informers. That their Society will raise a Fund against the other, and that they will endeavour to bring back Causes by a *Supersedeas*, wherein Mr Masson the Lord Chief Justice Holt's Clerk has been very serviceable.

15.

SPCK Abstract Letter Book (CR1/01) 1699–1701, no. 341 and British Library Harleian MS 7190 fo. 14v, no. 365. Extract from letters of Bedford to the Secretary. 3 September and 24 November 1701. [After discussing the study of Hebrew learning, the former concludes] Lastly desires the Society to acquaint some of the members of the Society for

⁷⁸ i.e. those in London.

⁷⁹ Charles Sloper (see n. 47).

⁸⁰ See n. 75. The next item suggests that the Society of the Clergy was finding it hard to work in unison as Bedford had hoped.

Reformation of Manners that he has received their parcel. [After discussing the promotion of Oriental learning among the clergy, the latter continues]. That as to the Business of Societies, that of their Clergy seems to be of no use, and that he would fain have prevailed with them to have sent an Address to his Majestie, but could not. That their Charity Schools are much as they were, but rather on the Declension. That their Society for Reformation had obtained of the Grand Jury a Presentment of such Magistrates as live not in the City and of others that were uncapable of Acting and had obliged them to appoint their Deputies. That they visit constantly the Taverns and Alehouses and of the latter have suppress one half and particularly that the Alehouses in his Parish are reduced from 37 to 18. That they had detected a Notorious Cheat of the Aleconners who were wont to procure from the Apothecaries what they call Grains and other intoxicating Drugs which being infused into Drink causes a great Thirst in those that take of it, flies into their Brains and soon bereaves them of their sense and Reason, and that they will take away the licenses of such Persons as they can find using it. Desires Mr Yates to excuse him that he has not procured such a Presentment as was recommended to him from hence, which happened because the Foreman of the Jury is no good Friend to Societies and for other Reasons, but he will attempt it again at the next Sessions.

16.

[Bristol Record Office 04217, fo. 6.] *Civitas Bristol. Ad Adjournament' General' Session' Pacis tent' pro Com' Civit' Bristol, apud Guildhall Die veneris decimo septimo Die Aprilis, Anno Regni Dominae nostrae Annae, Dei Gratia, Angliae, Scotiae, Franciae et Hiberniae Reginae, primo, Coram Johanne Hawkins Armig' Majore, Thoma Day⁸¹ Milite, Willielmo Jackson Armig', Willielmo Swymmer Armig', Ricardo Lane⁸² Armig' et Samuele Wallis⁸³ Armig', Aldermannis et Justiciariis Com' et Civitatis praedictae.*

We the *Mayor* and *Aldermen, Justices of the Peace* for the County of the City of *Bristol*, having taken into our Serious Consideration Her Majesty's gracious Proclamation for the Encouragement of True Religion and Virtue, and putting in Execution the many good Laws against all Immoral, Vicious and profane Practices, are with Thankful and Dutiful Hearts truly Sensible of our indispensible Obligations to serve Her Majesty therein in the most effectual manner pursuant to her Pious Commands.

And that we may the more Conscientiously discharge our Duty in an Affair of such Grand Importance to her Majesty's Government and Happy Reign, We think fit in this publick manner to signifie that we heartily and sincerely resolve to discountenance all the Neglect of the Worship and Service of God on the Lord's Day, Blasphemy, profane

⁸¹ See notes on SRM members no. 19.

⁸² See n. 14.

⁸³ See notes on SRM members no. 54.

Swearing and Cursing, Prophanation of the Lord's Day, excessive Drinking, Lewdness, Bawdy-houses, publick Gaming-houses and Places, and other disorderly Houses, or any dissolute, immoral and disorderly Practices, by executing most strictly the Laws against all such offenders, and against all Officers and Persons that contrary to their Duty shall be remiss or Negligent in putting the said Laws in Execution.

And we do by this our Order of Court require all *High-Constables, Church-Wardens, Petit Constables* and all other Officers within their several Wards and Parishes, and in their several Stations to be Constant in their Enquiries after all such Persons as shall be guilty of any of the aforesaid Offences, and to bring them from time to time before some of her Majesty's Justices of the Peace for this City, that they may be proceeded against with the utmost Severity of the Law.

We do further declare our Resolution, That we will give Countenance and due Encouragement to such Persons as shall at any time give us Information of any Neglect, Partiality, Connivance or undue Practices of any Officer that shall not be faithful and diligent in Discharge of his Trust and Office; and that we will be assistant in all Respects (in Person if Occasion require) to such Officers as shall be active and industrious in the Performance of their respective Duties; that so nothing may be wanting in us towards Perfecting the Reformation of Manners so Piously intended by her Majesty, and so impatiently desired by those that have any regard to the Prosperity of their Country, and desire to retrieve the Ancient Virtue and Glory of our Nation.

Bristol, Printed by William Bonny in Small-street, 1702.

17.

[Arthur Bedford, *Serious Reflections on the Scandalous Abuse and Effects of the Stage: in a Sermon preached at the Parish-Church of St Nicolas in the City of Bristol, on Sunday the 7th Day of January, 1704/5.* (Bristol, 1705), pp. 39–44.] Grand Jury presentment, 6 December 1704. We the Grand-Jurors for our Sovereign Lady the Queen, for the Body of the County of this City do (as in Conscience and Duty bound) acknowledge the good Endeavours that have been used by this Worshipful Bench,⁸⁴ for some Years past, to discourage Immorality and Profaneness by bringing under Restraint, and endeavouring to suppress those evil Methods by which they were promoted and encouraged; such as *Musick-houses*, and other *Lewd and Disorderly Houses*, the *Exercise of Unlawful Games*, the *extravagant Number of Ale-houses, Tipling, or idle Walking on the Lord's Day, profane Cursing and Swearing, Acting of Plays and Interludes*, which Endeavours tending to God's Glory, your Zeal and Forwardness therein hath justly gained you the Esteem and Honour of all good People of this City and the adjacent Counties, to whom you have not only showed a good Example, but encouraged to prosecute so good a Work: and we are also with all humble Submission bound to represent the sad apprehensions

⁸⁴ The Mayor for 1704–5 was Francis Whitchurch, SRM member no. 55.

we have of the same Evils again breaking in upon us worse than formerly, by the *Increase of the great Number of Tipling-houses*, kept by such who in Contempt of Justice sell Ale without License, (the *Lord's Day* being much profaned by *Tipling in such Houses*) and also by the great Concourse of People in publick Places, under pretence of hearing News on that Day. But that which puts us more especially under these *sad Apprehensions*, is the late Permission given to the *Publick Stage*,⁸⁵ in the Liberties of this City, from whence some have conceived hopes it shall be tolerated always, and Countenance (or at least Connivance) given to *Acting of Plays and Interludes* within this City and Country, which (if it should be) will exceedingly eclipse the good Order and Government of this City, corrupt and debauch our *Youth*, and utterly ruin many *Apprentices* and *Servants*, already so *Unruly* and *Lentious*, that they are with great Difficulty kept under any reasonable Order or Government by their Masters.

We could wish that these our Sad Apprehensions were groundless: But, when in all Ages, *Acting of Plays and Interludes* hath been attended with all manner of *Profaneness, Lewdness, Murthers, Debauching, and Ruining Youth of both Sexes*, infusing *Principles of Idleness and Extravagancy* into all People that resort to them. We hope your Worships seriously will consider of Effectual Methods to prevent them, and with the greatest Zeal and Fervency put the same in Execution, when it is apparent that all the Methods to correct and keep them within modest Bounds (where they are tolerated) have proved ineffectual:⁸⁶ And all Wise Men are convinced that there are no Methods of hindering

⁸⁵ A travelling company, based at Norwich, called the Duke of Grafton's Servants and managed by Mr Power, tried hard to establish a theatre in Bristol at this period. On 19 July 1704 the Common Council urged the Mayor and Aldermen to prevent any acting within the city jurisdiction 'by reason of the ill consequences by the introduction of lewdness and idle debauchery', but this failed to prevent plays being acted at the ensuing Fair in St James (see n. 17 for efforts to prevent this) and by 1705 a playhouse had been set up in Bristol. While this has traditionally been associated with Tucker Street, where plays were held during St Paul's Fair in January (see Grand Jury presentment for October 1694 in Bristol Record Office 04452(1)), it is more likely that the playhouse was on St Augustine's Back. It is not clear when efforts to establish a theatre there finally ceased, as Bedford records acting visits until late 1707, while on 13 September 1708 he reported to the SPCK (Abstract Letter Book 1708–9 CR1/1B no. 1394) that the players driven out of the liberties of the city had resorted to Stokes Croft in the time of the fair, whereupon the Gloucestershire JPs had made a sessions order that no plays should be acted in the county (see below items 22–3). A dubious version of why the Bristol players were expelled is given in Sir W. Barnett, *A Second Tale of a Tub* (1715) pp. 215–16, which concludes by noting that the gentleman at the charge of building the new fabric of a playhouse was forced to let it out as a warehouse. The St Augustine's Back site was referred to as a theatre in 1714 (*Bristol Post-Boy* 20 November 1714, advertisement for a concert), used again as a theatre in the 1725–31 period, then became an Assembly Room before finally being converted into Lady Huntingdon's Chapel.

⁸⁶ For an attempt by the Bristol actors to present themselves as friends to a reformed stage and the reformation of manners, see the printed prologue and epilogue to a performance of *Timon of Athens*, written by John Froude, preserved in Avon County Reference Library Bristol Collection no. 10633 and copied in no. 7976, part of which is reprinted in G.T. Watts, *Theatrical Bristol* (Bristol, 1915), p. 24.

or preventing their Mischiefs, but by totally suppressing them. Your Worships Task is not so difficult; Preventing Remedies being more natural and easy than Punishing. And we humbly conceive, you have reasons more cogent to stir you up to this Work, than offer themselves to Cities and Places where they have been tolerated, abounding with *Gentry* and *Nobility*, whose *Estates* and *Leisure* render such Extravagancies more tolerable.⁸⁷ But if in such Places their dire and calamitous Effects have been so sensibly felt, how much more, in a City not to be upheld but by Trade and Industry, will they be insupportable? We therefore do not doubt but all due Care will be taken by your Worships to redress and prevent these *Grievances*, that a Stop may be put to the further Progress of *Immorality* and *Profaneness*, and the Work of *Reformation* carried on, so earnestly prest by Her Majesty's Proclamation, whose Pious Endeavours God hath so signally owned in the great Victories with which he hath blessed her Arms,⁸⁸ and whose glorious Example we doubt not but you will follow, to your lasting Honour and Renown, and the Encouragement and Comfort of all Good Citizens. *Walter Chapman.*⁸⁹ *Daniel Hickman.* *Edward Thurston.* *Thomas Adderly.* *William Galbraith.* *Thomas Cadell.* *Thomas Yate.* *Stephen Peloquin.* *Richard Taylor Junior.*⁹⁰ *James Stewart.*⁹¹ *John Scott.* *Jeremiah Pearce.*

18.

[Arthur Bedford, *Serious Reflections on the Scandalous Abuse and Effects of the Stage: in a Sermon preached at the Parish-Church of St Nicolas in the City of Bristol, on Sunday the 7th Day of January, 1704/5.*⁹² (Bristol, 1705), pp.21–2]. In vain may we pretend to a Reformation of Manners and a *Regulation of our Youth*, when such Temptations lie in their Way, which, if frequented, will certainly debase them.⁹³ In vain is the *Bee-Hive* the *Seal* of our *Corporation* for the Poor,⁹⁴ as a Sign of their Industry, whilst other Places in this City shall be frequented, which encourage them to Idleness. In this Case we

⁸⁷ No doubt a reference to London but also, more particularly, to Bath, where a playhouse had recently been established.

⁸⁸ Notably Blenheim in August 1704.

⁸⁹ See notes on SRM members no. 14.

⁹⁰ Presumably the son of SRM member no. 50.

⁹¹ See notes on SRM members no. 47.

⁹² This was, presumably, one in the series of sermons for Reformation of Manners preached on Sunday evenings in St Nicholas since 1700; see SRM minutes above.

⁹³ This sermon opened Arthur Bedford's series of published attacks on the stage, namely: *A Second Advertisement concerning the Profaneness of the Play-House* (Bristol, 1705); *The Evil and Danger of Stage-Plays* (Bristol, 1706); *A Serious Remonstrance in Behalf of the Christian Religion* (1719); and *A Sermon preached in the Parish-Church of St Botolph's Aldgate* (1730) (all reprinted in 1974 by Garland Publishing). These extensive writings show how Bedford saw the reformation of manners and the reformation of the stage as inseparably linked, as he increasingly came to hold the stage responsible for attacks on, and the failure of, the reformation of manners campaign.

⁹⁴ A committee of three, including Richard Codrington (SRM member no. 16) and Nathaniel Wade (SRM member no. 53) had designed this seal, with the motto *Hiemis memores aestate laborant* (mindful of winter, they work in summer).

expect that Youth will follow that which is most agreeable to their corrupt Inclinations; and whilst the Temptations are equally strong on either Side, and the heart of Man is fully set in him to do Evil, we cannot but expect that the Consequences hereof will be fatal to some, and the *Devil* will not be wanting to make use of such Opportunities to tempt men to sin, until they are involved in eternal Destruction.

19.

[SPCK Minute Book I, 1698–1706.] 4 October 1705. Mr Bedford's letter, which gave an account that the charity schools were wholly laid aside in that city.⁹⁵ ... 6 December 1705. Mr Bedford [present at the meeting] reported that he and the Secretary had attended Mr Day⁹⁶ the Mayor of Bristol [who was in London] and that Mr Mayor did promise to promote the reestablishment of the charity schools in Bristol as far as he can. Bedford reported the Bishop of Bristol had subscribed £5 per annum to this good intent already. ... 7 Feb. 1705/6. Wyndham⁹⁷ reported that he had discoursed with Colonel Yate⁹⁸ about the restablishment of charity schools and that Colonel Yate was of opinion Mr Bedford might solicit subscriptions forthwith and at the Colonel's return to Bristol that design shall not want encouragement.

20.

[Arthur Bedford, *The Evil and Danger of Stage-Plays: Showing their Natural Tendency to destroy Religion and Introduce a General Corruption of Manners: In almost Two Thousand Instances, taken from the Plays of the two last Years, against all the Methods lately used for their Reformation* (Bristol, 1706), pp. 226–7.] Grand Jury presentment, 15 August 1706. We must not omit here to Declare how much it afflicts our Thoughts, That after so great Obligations to *Divine Benignity* in the late wonderful Revolution: And in Her Majesty's securing to us, our *Religion, Liberties and Properties*, then restored: And in Her Pious Zeal to convey these *Privileges* to Posterity by Her repeated *Proclamations* against all *Vice and Immorality*, newly rehearsed to us, that yet the worthy Designs thereof are not effectually attained, nor *Wickedness* so intirely suppressed by the active Endeavours of our Magistrates, as we could heartily wish. For which End, we would humbly recommend to Your Worships utmost Care and unanimous Zeal, to search out and pursue the most effectual and lawful Methods for crushing the newly erected *Play-House*,⁹⁹ that *School of Debauchery and Nursery of Profaneness*, where *Vice and Lewdness* appear Bare-faced, and Impudent, *Swearing* notoriously Practised and Recommended: The Danger and Growth of which, we have been seasonably warned against by our Right Reverend the Lord *Bishop*, and other Reverend *Divines* from the *Pulpit*.

⁹⁵ This was followed by SPCK efforts to get the schools re-established, by approaching the Bishop and, via him, Mr Cary, as well as the Dean.

⁹⁶ Nathaniel Day, a soapboiler.

⁹⁷ Francis Wyndham, MP for Gloucester 1709–10 and a friend of Bedford.

⁹⁸ See notes on SRM members no. 58.

⁹⁹ See n. 85 and items 22–3.

21.

[Matthew Tindal,¹⁰⁰ *The Rights of the Christian Church Asserted* Part I (second edition, corrected, 1706) p. 285.] Some indeed say 'tis no wonder if High Church are not fond of Corporations for the employing of the Poor; because the Management of so troublesome and expensive a Business will fall to the Sober and Industrious, whom they despair to bring over to their Interest; so they think that will be apt to give 'em in all Places where they are erected too great an Interest. Of this Bristol is a Remarkable Instance, and the publishing an Account how differently Things are there now managed, from what they were when in the Hands of Tories, might not a little contribute to show the most prejudiced, how unlikely any Place is to thrive, where High Church prevails, which in former Reigns was for destroying Trade itself, as prejudicial to its Interest.

22.

[Temple Letter Book, Bristol Record Office, P/Tem. Ka. 4, fos 86–88; extracts from a letter of Arthur Bedford to 'J.T. an Ingenious Clergyman',¹⁰¹ explaining why, in the 1710 election, Bedford had not voted in Bristol but had voted at Gloucester in the county election for the sitting (Whig) MPS, Matthew Moreton and John Guise]. Bristol 10 November 1710. The reasons why I voted for the two old Members was this. When the Play House was set up in this City, I appeared against it both in preaching and printing. And therefore when the Patriots of the Play House were set up both in City and County to be pillars of the Church,¹⁰² I thought I could do no less than vote in the one place and be neuter in the other. And as by voting I suffer the Censure of being against the Church, so neutrality in this case would have exposed me to the Censure of being lukewarm, or turning about and being for the Playhouse . . . Since I find by the former Election, when Mr Colston's Nephew stood,¹⁰³ that tho' a neutrality is allowed to others, yet no such thing can be allowed to me . . . Should Dissenters prevail (which God forbid) there will be some Religion, but should the Prophaneness of the Play House succeed there can be none at all. And therefore if I apprehend a greater danger to all revealed Religion, the Ruin of Souls, the Increase of Atheism, Debauchery, and the pulling down of God's most dreadful Judgments from that Quarter which others do not mind, I must be excused for voting differently from others. And as it is fit, that they should have their Liberty, so it is fit that I should have mine,

¹⁰⁰ A leading Deist and anti-clerical writer.

¹⁰¹ This may well be the Rev. James Taylor (see n. 46) who was a canon of Wells, since J.T.'s letter (fos. 78–84) prompting Bedford's replies refers to his presence at Wells for the convocation election.

¹⁰² In Bristol Edward Colston senior and Joseph Earle stood for the Tories; William Daines alone for the Whigs. Earle, rather than Colston, must be the 'patriot of the playhouse' in Bristol. In Gloucestershire the Tory candidates were John Berkeley and John Howe; Berkeley and Moreton were successful.

¹⁰³ Edward Colston, the nephew of the philanthropist, is supposed to have stood in 1705, though no recorded poll ensued.

especially when I voted for such Persons who constantly frequent the Church Service and Sacraments, and are not in any Respect inferior to their Antagonists in a sober, pious and exemplary Life and conversation . . . I told the Dean¹⁰⁴ who had espoused the Interest of one of the Candidates, that if he could engage him to joyne with other Justices to remove the Play House at Stoaks Croft,¹⁰⁵ I would engage to stay at home . . . At the former Election, when I was misrepresented to Mr Colston, I gave him the Reasons why I could not vote against the two Old Members, either then or at any other Time, with which he was then very well satisfied and did never since desire me to alter my Resolution. And as I shall honour and Respect him, so it was only for his Sake, and by his consent,¹⁰⁶ that I was neuter at the city Elections; otherwise the same Reason which induced me to vote for the County, would have been as prevalent for the City.

23.

[Temple Letter Book, Bristol Record Office, P/Tem. Ka. 4, fos 94, 100–3; extracts from Arthur Bedford's second letter to 'J.T.'.] Bristol 23 December 1710. The Members of the Church of England are divided in their opinions. All wish well to the Church, but differ concerning the best method to promote its welfare. All Desire the reclaiming of Dissenters, but they differ in the manner how to do it, some think it need be done by milder, others by severe courses . . . The Dissenters set up none but joyn with the Churchmen of either side as their Interest and Inclination leads them, and I do not wonder at their joining with such who would treat them with the mildest Methods . . . All the new converted Dissenters that ever I was acquainted with (and I have been acquainted with several) are men of Moderate Temper, desirous that all the Dissenters should be treated with the greatest Tenderness imaginable . . . When men vote for such as are of violent turbulent Tempers, and

¹⁰⁴ This could refer either to Robert Booth, Dean of Bristol (who voted Tory in 1715), or to the Dean of Gloucester, Knightly Chetwood; see Craig, 'Movement for Reformation of Manners', pp. 230–5 for Booth's earlier zeal as a reformer of manners when Archdeacon of Durham. He was also an SPCK correspondent.

¹⁰⁵ See n. 85. In December 1709 Bristol's common council established a committee to act with the Gloucestershire JPs to ensure that the players had no reception within 5 miles of Bristol and in 1710–11 both Nathaniel Wade and the Town Clerk were paid for legal advice on how to suppress the playhouse. By 1715, however, if not before, plays by the Duke of Grafton's Servants were regularly advertised (in the *Bristol Post-Boy*) at the 'Great Booth in Stoak's Croft' during July and August.

¹⁰⁶ If he had granted this consent, Colston had clearly retracted it by 23 November 1710, when he wrote to the trustees of Temple Charity School 'I am sorry that Mr Bedford your Minister hath given the Clergy of your City, that are well affected to the Established Church, an Occasion of so much Scandal as to be found in the Gloucester Election heading some of the most violent Sectaries and Enemies to it, whereby he hath Confirmed them in their former Opinion, that he is no Sound Son of the Church, but rather inclined to, and a Favourer of Phanaticism, And I cannot but be of the same Judgment, because this is not the first Time that he hath sided with them, but constantly upon the like Occasion hath joyned with them against those that are truly in the Churches Interest. Therefore if I decline all future Correspondence with him, he may easily guess at the Reason of it.'

especially when the Clerymen shall vote for men of Atheistical Principles, such who seldom come to Church, Promoters of the Playhouse, Common Swearers. Cursers, Drunkards, Whoremongers, Profane and Lewd in their conversations, because, to serve a Turn, they style themselves Pillars of the Church (for this has been the case in some Elections) I am afraid it will give too great an occasion of Scandal and cause the new Converts to return to their old ways . . . That acquaintance which I had with Dissenters (a crime always to be trumped up) was on this Occasion. When Alderman Bachelor was Mayor, he set up a Society for Reformation in this City, of which I was a member at the third meeting, but it happened that some Dissenters had subscribed before me. Our only design was to suppress Vice and Profaneness. They treated me with the utmost respect, as a Member, and I thought myself obliged to return the same Civility. Upon this several both Clergy and Laity were offended at me, and though above three parts of the Society were members of the Church of England, yet others zealous for the Church, but cold in the Case of Immorality, never ceased their Revilings, until they had brought it to nothing. I never flattered any in their Schism; I always observed to them how much the Church encouraged Virtue; and that the Vicious Persons in her Communion was a Disgrace to her. And I was not without hopes of bringing some to the Church by this means. If I was made all things to all, it was for the Apostles Reason, that by all means I might gaine some . . . For that which happened at the Election, was but the Reviving of the old Calumnies, which I find I must expect as long as I live.

The following notes on Society members are based on information gleaned largely from published sources, such as the marriage licenses for Bristol to 1700, Baptist and Quaker records and pollbooks, but supplemented by some manuscript material. Pressure of space precludes full referencing, but three basic sources have been: *The Inhabitants of Bristol in 1696* ed. E. Ralph and M. Williams (Bristol Record Society, XXV, 1968); A.D. Beaven, *Bristol Lists: Municipal and Miscellaneous* (Bristol, 1899); and *Bristol Corporation of the Poor 1696–1834* ed. E.E. Butcher (Bristol Record Society, III, 1932). The information (where available) is laid out as follows: Name (number of attendances at Society meetings and how often chairman (C), if ever) (any alternative titles given in the lists of attenders – first date only); occupation; address and tax rating in 1696; corporation offices; parish, Society of Merchant Venturers (SMV) or other offices; role in the Incorporation of the Poor; other positions of responsibility; information indicating political and religious affiliation. Information obtainable from the texts reprinted here is not repeated. In some cases it has not been possible to distinguish several potential candidates; basic information has been given on each, with more on the most likely person.

1. William Andrews (6) (Captain 12 March 1700). Merchant. 1696 St. Augustine £600. Churchwarden St. Augustine 1691–3 and in vestry from 1693. Poor guardian 4 years; 2 as assistant.
2. Thomas Anthony (6). A T.A. senior of Temple assessed at standard rate in 1696.
3. John Bachelor (13:4C) (Mayor 8 March 1700; Esquire 19 March 1700). Linendraper and merchant. 1696 St. Nicholas Street gentleman £600. Common councillor 1690–1711 (death), sheriff 1693–4, mayor 1699–1700, alderman 1702–11 (St James 1702, St Nicholas 1702–11). Deputy lieutenant in 1702. Poor guardian for All Saints from 1696 for 12 years; 3 as assistant and 2 as governor (1703–5); gave £50 in 1700. SMV master 1706–8. Member of Tory Artillery Company c.1679–80. President of Sons of Clergy in 1701, so son of Anglican clergyman. SPCK correspondent by 1708.
4. William Barwick (3) (Berwick 7 January 1701). Baker. One of six donors of brass branch to St James church September 1697. Informed on profane swearer in 1700 as constable of St Michael's ward. 1722 voted for Earle and Elton.
5. Richard Bayly (5). Soapboiler and merchant. 1696 St Thomas Street £600. Common councillor 1697–1716, sheriff 1701–2. Honorary Poor guardian, deputy governor 1706–7; lent £20 in 1697. Indicted in 1681 for absence from church; in 1692 subscribed £5 to Lewin's Mead Presbyterian academy plan. President of Gloucestershire Society 1702.
6. Samuel Bayly (1). Mercer. 1696 All Saints £600. Common councillor 1696–1708 (death), sheriff 1701–2. Lent Poor £15 in 1697. Indicted for absence from church 1681. Left £24 to All Saints parish for sermon on St Andrews Day and 1s gifts to 8 almswomen annually.
7. Thomas Bayly (15). Pewterer and/or merchant? 1696 Christchurch and Temple, both at standard rate. Pewterer was a Quaker (died 1720) of Christchurch, who suffered 1664–1683 and subscribed to their Workhouse plan in 1697. Merchant gave £10 for bread on 16 April for All Saints almshouse 1714; 1722 voted for Earle and Elton.
8. William Bayly (22). Shipwright. 1696 several, but most likely is of Bridge Street St Nicholas £600 bachelor. Common councillor 1705–17 (death); sheriff 1711–12. Poor guardian 4 years; 3 as assistant. Bequeathed £50 to poor housekeepers of St Nicholas on 25 March annually.
9. Arthur Bedford (37:5C). Vicar of Temple parish 1692–1713. 1696 Temple at standard rate. Previously curate of Dr Read (42) at St Nicholas; rector of Newton St Loe 1713–37; from 1724 lived at Hoxam where chaplain of Ashe's Hospital, and lecturer of St Botolph's Aldersgate. Chaplain to Wriothesley, Duke of Bedford and later to Frederick, Prince of Wales. SPCK correspondent in Bristol 1699–1713. President of Sons of Clergy in 1722 and preacher to them in 1700 and 1703. See introduction, notes and *D.N.B.* for his many publications.
10. Robert Bodenham (40). Sailmaker and trader. 1696 The Marsh at standard rate. Freed as sailmaker's apprentice 1645 and died 1726. Leading member of Broadmead Baptist church; £100 bequest helped

foundation of Bristol Baptist College. Disarmed in 1684 as Whig of 27 firearms, 9 swords, 1 belt and 1 bandoleer; said to support Monmouth in 1685.

11. John Bowman (8). Cooper/hooper. 1696 Temple at ordinary rate. A Baptist of Temple Street in 1680s; disarmed in 1684 as a Whig; ordained deacon at Pithay Baptist church in 1705; died 1719–20.
12. William Burges (13). Woollendraper. 1696 All Saints £600. Common councillor February–October 1688. Indicted and heavily fined 1681–4 as dissenter. 1722 freeholder voted Earle and Elton.
13. Thomas Cary (1). Rector of St Philip and St Jacob 1675–1711 (death) and All Saints (1701–11); prebend of Bristol Cathedral (1693–1711); chaplain to Earl of Macclesfield in 1691. 1696 St Philip and St Jacob at tax rate for prebendaries. Brother of John Cary (see introduction) and father of William Cary (vicar of Temple after A. Bedford (9)). Refused SPCK correspondence in 1700, but regularly sent circulars until 1711 and gave £5 in 1705 and again in 1710. Leading Whig clergyman. *Sermon ... at Monthly Fast* (1691).
14. Walter Chapman (45). Tanner and city swordbearer (1718–26). 1696 St James Back £600. Poor guardian for St James 1696; assistant for 2 years and lent £5 in 1697. Frequent informer against profane swearing and other offences in city court. Related by marriage to John Locke and Peter King. 1722 freeholder voted for Earle and Elton.
15. Thomas Clements (20) (Clement 19 March 1700). Shipwright. 1696 St Augustine £600. Common councillor 1705–22 (death), sheriff 1709–10, mayor June–Sept. 1718, alderman 1719–22 (St Michael). Married in 1682 to Elizabeth Duddlestone. Churchwarden of St Augustine 1695–7 and on vestry from 1695, feoffee of parish lands in 1708. President of Gloucestershire Society 1699.
16. Richard Codrington (20:1C). Linendraper/mercer and merchant. 1696 All Saints £600. Died April 1701. Deputy lieutenant in 1694. Poor guardian for All Saints 1696; assistant for 4 years. Member of Whiggish Grand Jury July 1680. Testified publicly in favour of Quaker prisoners in 1682 and signed marriage certificate of leading Quakers in 1699; executor of Quaker merchant John Andrews in 1699, with C. Serjant (45) as trustee for intended bride.
17. Richard Coleman (21). Sergemaker? 1696 Castle at standard rate. Presented January 1683 as Castle inhabitant not attending any parish church. Informed on a profane swearer in Castle in 1700.
18. John Day (3). Merchant. 1696 Marsh, St Stephens £600. Two John Days active in this period; senior is more likely candidate for SRM. JD senior common councillor 1696–1705 (died 1708), sheriff 1697–8. Disarmed as Whig in 1684; SMV master 1698–9; master of St Stephens Ringers 1702–3. JD junior common councillor 1708–18 (death aged 44), sheriff 1708–9, mayor 1717–18. SMV master 1716–17. Poor treasurer 1715–16 and deputy governor 1717–18. Convicted of swearing two profane curses in September 1699.
19. Thomas Day (20:9C) (Sir 12 November 1700). Merchant and sugarrefiner. 1696, on the Bridge, St Nicholas, assessed as knight.

- Common councillor 1661–1684 (when ousted as Whig) and 1688–1710 (death), sheriff 1670–1, mayor Feb.–Oct. 1688 and 1694–5, alderman in 1684, 1688 and 1689–1710 for Redcliffe. Deputy lieutenant in 1694 and 1702. Whig MP 1695–1701 with R. Yate (58) (both defeated candidates in 1689). Left £10 to St Thomas poor, £30 for weekly bread for poor and £50 to rebuild almshouse in Long Row.
20. Moses Deane (15) (Dean 12 June 1702). ‘Gentleman’ (i.e. lawyer?) and merchant (importing Spanish wool 1700). 1696 St Peters assessed as gentleman.
21. Sir John Duddlestone (44:23C). Bodicemaker turned merchant in West India and tobacco trade. 1696 St Werburgh assessed as baronet. Common councillor Feb.–Oct. 1688 (death 1716; tomb in All Saints). Deputy lieutenant in 1694 and 1702. SMV master 1715–16. Poor guardian for All Saints 1696; honorary guardian; assistant for 2 years, deputy governor 1699–1700, governor 1700–1; lent £25 in 1697. Testified publicly in favour of Quaker prisoners in 1682. Became SPCK correspondent end of 1700. Trustee of Temple charity school 1709.
22. Thomas Edwards (12:8C) (Esquire 19 March 1700). Attorney. 1696 St Johns assessed as esquire. 1644–1727 (monument in St James, and benefactions to St James and St Johns). Deputy lieutenant in 1694 and 1702. Poor guardian for Trinity 1696; assistant 1 year, honorary guardian (gave £100 in 1699) and governor 1717–18. Acted as attorney for dissenters in 1670s and 1680s; indicted for absence from church in 1682 and disarmed as Whig in 1684. But also acted for local gentry families Smyth and Astry (left £400 by Arabella, Countess of Suffolk) and leading merchants (e.g. Sir Robert Cann), and most importantly for Edward Colston. Witness to the Colston settlements and principal executor of will of Edward Colston. In 1722 voted for Hart only. His son, T.E. jnr (?1673–1743), also a lawyer, was married to Edward Colston’s niece and was Tory MP 1713–15 but defeated by Whig chicanery in 1715 election; later, as MP for Wells, he was called a Tory but often voted with Whigs. One of these is presumably St Augustine churchwarden 1689–91 and on vestry 1690 onwards and president of Sons of Clergy in 1718.
23. Abraham Elton (22:1C) (Sheriff 6 April 1703). Merchant and owner of ships, copperworks etc. 1696 St Werburgh £600. Born 1654; bought manor of Clevedon 1709; created baronet 1717 for services in 1715 rebellion; worth £100,000 at death in 1728. Common councillor 1699–1728, sheriff 1702–3, mayor 1710–11, alderman 1712–28. SMV treasurer 1705–8, master 1708–9. Whig MP 1722–27. Poor treasurer 1701–2 and governor 1713–15. President of Gloucestershire Society 1689 and 1715. Treasurer of Lewin’s Mead Presbyterian congregation 1693–4 and major figure in its running; major donor to Stokes Croft Presbyterian charity school in 1722. Bequeathed land for schools in out-parish of St Philip and Jacob as well as Clevedon, for poor of St Johns and St Werburgh, for SMV and Trinity almshouses and for Presbyterian minister to attend workers at his copper works at Conham.
24. Richard Franklin (5). Merchant. 1696 King Street, St Stephen, £600.

Common councillor 1696–1707. SMV master 1702–4. An R.F. associated with Baptists in 1680s; R.F. cordwinder informed on a profane swearer in 1700.

25. John Gibb (3) (Gibbs 1 October 1703). Vicar of Bedminster with Redcliffe and St Thomas parishes 1702–44. President of Sons of Clergy in 1720. Became SPCK correspondent in 1714 and active establishing charity schools in his parishes 1714–16. 1722 voted for Earle and Hart; voted for Elton and Scrope and signed Whig petition against election of Thomas Coster in 1734. *Mutual Duties of Magistrates and People* (Bristol, 1721).

26. Mark Goddard (9). Haberdasher, merchant and shipowner. 1696 Redcliffe St, St Thomas £600. Poor treasurer 1708–9. Accused of being one of ringleaders of attacks against Tory voters in 1713 election. 1722 freeholder voted for Earle and Elton.

27. Thomas Goldney (5). Grocer and merchant. 1696 High Street, St Nicholas £600. 1664–1731. Fined £200 for refusing common council place in 1685; in royal mandate for city freedom 1688. Poor guardian for St Mary Port 1696; assistant for 1 year. Leading Quaker and involved in their Workhouse and its school.

28. Charles Harford (3). Soapmaker and merchant. 1696 Sts Philip and Jacob £600. Poor guardian 4 years; assistant 1 year and treasurer 1700–1; lent £10 1697 and gave £60 1700. Leading Quaker (paid huge fines in 1680s and imprisoned) and much involved in their Workhouse plans of late 1690s. At death (1709) properties bequeathed included Friends Workhouse in Temple Street; left £95 for poor Quakers and £20 to poor of native Marshfield.

29. John Harper (17). 1696 The Back, St Nicholas at standard rate. A J.H. had been common councillor 1650–61 and sheriff 1656–7; a J.H. was pardoned in 1687 for his role in Monmouth's rebellion. Will of J.H. 'gent', 'aged' made in Jan. 1708 leaves all to grandchild, including tenements at Royal Fort in tenure of Widow Harford.

30. James Harris (8) (Captain 12 March 1700). Merchant. 1696 King Street, St Nicholas at £50 p.a. Poor guardian for St Nicholas 1696; first treasurer; lent £10 in 1697. A J.H. snr was father-in-law of Rev. T. Cary (13), who was bond at marriage of J.H. jnr (both merchants) in 1686; a J.H. had been disarmed as Whig in 1684.

31. Edward Higgins (8). Soapmaker. 1696 St James Back at bachelor rate. Brother of Rev. Tobias Higgins. Freeholder voted for Freke and Edwards in 1715 and for Earle and Hart in 1722. 1732 will leaves properties in Broadmead; to be buried at St James.

32. Thomas Hodges (7). Sailmaker? 1696 Head of the Key, St Stephen at standard rate.

33. Richard Hollister (12). 1696 St Peters at standard rate. 1715 freeholder voted Freke and Edwards.

34. John Horsington (16). Carpenter. 1696 Temple at standard rate. 1722 freeholder voted Earle and Elton.

35. Richard Hort (32). Druggetmaker and clothier. 1696 Castle at standard rate. Presented January 1683 as Castle inhabitant not attending

any parish church; disarmed as Whig in 1684. Informed on profane swearers as chief constable of Castle Ward in 1701. In 1722 gave £50 to Stokes Croft Presbyterian charity school and one of original school feoffees. 1722 voted Earle and Elton.

36. Samuel Jacob (16). Apothecary. 1696 St Johns at standard rate. Poor guardian 4 years; assistant two years and on various committees in 1700–2. President of Gloucestershire Society 1711–12. Imprisoned as dissenter 1682; incriminated by James Holloway in 1683 as radical plotter in early 1680s and disarmed as Whig in 1684. On committee for establishment of Presbyterian academy in Bristol 1693; in December 1709 was sole opponent of continuation of M. Pope (son of 41) as Lewin's Mead pastor.

37. Charles Jones junior (6). Merchant. 1696 Castle £600. Fined £50 for refusal to join common council in 1685. SMV treasurer. Poor guardian for Castle 1696 until death (1701); lent £15 in 1697. Leading Quaker active from 1676 onwards, imprisoned in 1680s, disarmed as Whig in 1684 and centrally involved in establishment of Quaker Workhouse.

38. Thomas Lewis (7). Linendraper and merchant? 1696 Horse Fair, St James at standard rate. Several T.L.s so hard to identify with certainty.

39. Thomas Melton (10). Haberdasher and merchant. 1696 St Ewens (Milton) at standard rate. 1722 voted Earle and Elton.

40. John Poole (9). 1696 St Thomas Street at bachelor rate. A J.P. disarmed as Whig in 1684; several Pooles involved in Stokes Croft Presbyterian charity school from 1722. Informed on a profane swearer in 1695.

41. Michael Pope (2). Grocer and sugarrefiner. 1696 Whitson Court, St James assessed as esquire (though could be M.P. senior, grocer, 1696 gent, Barr's Lane, St James, who died by 1703). Common councillor Feb.–Oct. 1688 and alderman 1688–1723. Deputy lieutenant in 1694. Partner (with Baptists) and then sole owner of Whitson Court Sugar House. Leading Presbyterian by 1675; protested at Newgate conditions of imprisoned dissenters in 1682 and fined heavily in 1680s for nonconformity; disarmed in 1684 as Whig. Important figure in Lewin's Mead Presbyterian meeting, where second son, Michael, became minister (1705–18); major donor to Stokes Croft Presbyterian charity school in 1722.

42. Dr John Read (7). Rector of St Nicholas from c. 1686 until 1713 (death). 1696 King Street, St Nicholas assessed at rate for Doctors of Divinity. Bedford (9) was his curate before April 1693. First lessee of a house in what became Queen's Square in 1699. Offered SPCK correspondence in Bristol with Bedford in 1700 but declined. President of Sons of Clergy in 1712 and preacher to them in 1701. Bequeathed £20 to poor of his parish.

43. Henry Sampson (39). Maltster. 1696 Castle at standard rate. Poor guardian 12 years; assistant for 8, deputy governor 1710–11; on several committees 1698–1703. Presented January 1683 as Castle inhabitant not attending any parish church; disarmed in 1684 as Whig. Held lease for Lewin's Mead Presbyterian meeting-house in 1706 with O. Tyndall (52). 1722 'gent' voted Earle and Elton; Scrope and Elton in 1734.

44. Peter Saunders (4). Merchant. 1696 St Werburgh assessed as gentleman. Common councillor Feb.–Oct. 1688 and 1694–1705 (death), sheriff 1696–7, mayor 1703–4, alderman 1705 (St Michael). SMV master 1696–7, treasurer 1700–5. Poor guardian for St Ewens 1696; assistant 1 year, honorary guardian, deputy governor 1702–3, treasurer 1699–1700; gave £100 in 1700 and £200 in will.
45. Cornelius Serjant (7) (Sergeant 19 March 1700; Serjeant 9 July 1700). Soapmaker. 1696 St Peters £600. Poor guardian for Trinity ward 1696; lent £10 in 1697. Active Quaker from 1670s to death 1726 and sufferer in early 1680s.
46. Edward Skrine (20). Brushmaker. 1696 Castle at standard rate. 1722 freeholder voted Earle and Elton. Will proved 1728 leaves properties in Castle St and St James.
47. James Stewart (35). Dyer. 1696 Temple at standard rate. Poor guardian for Temple 1696. Churchwarden of Temple in 1697. 1722 freeholder voted Earle and Elton. Will made 1719 when ‘aged’ proved 1724 refers to properties in Temple and in Gloucestershire, a clothing business and £400 plus of cash legacies; to be buried with family at Temple.
48. Arthur Tayler (39). Merchant and/or, more likely, distiller. 1696 The Back, St Nicholas assessed as bachelor. Distiller was common councillor 1715–45 (death), sheriff 1719–20, mayor 1731–2, alderman 1731–45. Poor governor 1735–6; frequent informer against profane swearing and other offences in city courts. 1722 esquire and freeholder voted Earle and Elton.
49. Miles Tayler (7). Merchant. 1696 Temple assessed at standard rate.
50. Richard Tayler (15:2C). Ironmonger, ironmerchant and sugarrefiner. 1696 Redcliff Street, St Thomas £600. Common councillor 1712–15 (death), sheriff 1714–15 (when falsified election return in favour of Whigs). Member of ‘Whiggish’ Grand Jury July 1680. Poor guardian for Redcliffe in 1696; assistant for 4 years. Inventory of November 1718 worth £7641; had a country house.
51. William Tyler (4). Cooper? 1696 St Peters assessed at standard rate. Informed on profane swearers in 1701 as chief constable of Trinity Ward. 1715 a joiner of St Michaels voted for Freke and Edwards.
52. Onesiphorus Tyndall (41). Drysalter, grocer and merchant. 1696 Christchurch assessed at standard rate. From Tyndale family of Stinchcombe, Gloucestershire; freed 1683; died 1748 aged 91. Common councillor 1703–12, sheriff 1707–8; resigned office in 1712 when Occasional Conformity Act passed. Poor guardian 4 years; assistant for 2 years. President of Gloucestershire Society 1698–9. Active in Lewin’s Mead Presbyterian meeting and treasurer 1704. 1722 freeholder voted Earle and Elton; agent of petitioners against Tory MP Coster in 1734.
53. Nathaniel Wade (2) (Esquire 26 March 1700). Lawyer and town official. 1696 St Augustine and St Leonards, both as esquire. Common councillor and town clerk Jan.–Oct. 1688; steward of sheriff’s court 1705–12 (death 1718). Poor guardian for St Ewens in 1696 for 12 years; assistant 7 years, deputy governor 1704–5; lent £15 in 1697 and gave

- £50. President of Gloucestershire Society 1693–4. Member of Castle Green Independent meeting and heavily involved in radical plotting in 1680, 1683 and in Monmouth rebellion, when captured but pardoned after full confession (known thereafter as ‘Traitor’ Wade). In 1687 married Quaker Ann Davis though refused permission by Quaker meeting; second wife Elizabeth Vickris also a Quaker; signed marriage certificates for leading Quaker marriages of 1696 and 1699; sold land for new Quaker workhouse in 1698–1700. Major in charge of city militia against Kingswood colliers’ riots 1709.
54. Samuel Wallis (12:3C) (Alderman 12 March 1700, Esquire 19 March 1700). Ironmonger and ironmerchant. 1696 Baldwin St, St Nicholas assessed as esquire. Common councillor 1686–Jan. 1688 and Nov. 1688–1724 (death), sheriff 1687–8, mayor 1695–6, alderman 1700–24 (St Ewens 1700, St James 1700–2, St Nicholas 1702–17). Deputy lieutenant in 1702. First Poor governor 1696–8 then honorary guardian; lent £25 in 1697 and gave £100 in 1700 for costs of annual sermon at St Peters on election day. One of small minority on common council who supported compulsory clerical maintenance bill in 1711. His son (died 1715) had been anonymous donor for preaching in Marshalsea prison London, via SPCK; father refused to continue this after death as ‘charity begins at home’.
55. Francis Whitchurch (6) (Captain). Grocer, soapmaker and sugarrefiner. 1696 St Thomas Street, St Thomas £600. Common councillor 1695–1718 (death), sheriff 1696–7, mayor 1704–5, alderman 1705–18 (St Michaels 1705–15). Poor guardian for St Thomas ward 1696; assistant 3 years and governor 1708–10; gave £25 in 1699.
56. Samuel Whitchurch (12). Soapboiler and sugarrefiner. 1696 Temple parish at standard rate. Poor guardian 1698–1702.
57. Thomas Winstone (3). Glover. 1696 St James Back, St James £600. Common councillor 1699–1700. Poor treasurer 1702–3. In 1691 had married Quaker Hannah Dowell, although refused permission by Quakers because, though attending Quaker meetings regularly and professing intention to ‘walk and abide therein’, he was reckoned ‘very much unlike a friend’. Executor for his mother-in-law Quaker Elizabeth Dowell who left £10 to Quaker workhouse 1702. 1722 freeholder voted for Hart only. Bequeathed £100 for six coats for six poor men each November at St James church in 1722.
58. Robert Yate (7:2C) (Esquire 12 November 1700; Collonel 2 November 1703; The Honourable Collonel 17 April 1705). Merchant. 1696 St Werburgh assessed as esquire and widower. Common councillor 1684–1737 (death), sheriff 1685–6, mayor 1693–4, alderman 1700–37 (St Thomas 1700–3, St Ewens 1703–16). Deputy lieutenant in 1694 and 1702. Poor guardian for St Ewens in 1696; assistant 1 year, honorary guardian, governor 1702–3; lent £30 in 1697. SMV master 1692–4. Whig MP for Bristol 1695–1710 after unsuccessful candidature 1689 and 1690. SPCK correspondent from 1703.

**THE JOHN EVANS LIST OF DISSENTING
CONGREGATIONS AND MINISTERS IN BRISTOL,
1715–1729**

Edited by Kenneth Morgan

THE JOHN EVANS LIST OF DISSENTING CONGREGATIONS AND MINISTERS IN BRISTOL, 1715–1729

The John Evans List of Dissenting Congregations and Ministers is a county by county survey of the Baptist, Independent and Presbyterian chapels in England and Wales. It was compiled in 1716, 1717 and the early part of 1718, with additions made down to 1729. The Bristol section is published here for the first time.¹ The chief compiler of the list was John Evans, the Presbyterian minister of Hand Alley congregation, London. Evans was secretary to the committee of the three dissenting denominations, and was probably also secretary of the body of Presbyterian ministers. He gathered information from seventeen correspondents in the provinces. The material for Bristol was provided by an Independent pastor in the city, Isaac Noble, who handed in details to John Shute Barrington, later Viscount Barrington, who was responsible for three counties included in the list. The compilation of this information on the strength of Dissent came at a time when nonconformists hoped that oppressive legislation, especially the Occasional Conformity and Schism Acts, would be repealed by the Whigs who had come to power with the accession of the Hanoverians to the throne.²

In common with most other areas covered by the Evans List, the Bristol section contains a record of the Baptist, Independent and Presbyterian ministers and meeting houses, along with the number of hearers, their wealth and general status, and their voting patterns. The three denominations covered in detail were known to contemporaries as the 'Dissenting Interest'. There were, of course, differences between them, primarily with regard to polity and baptism, but their theology

¹ The original manuscript (MS.34.4) is deposited at Dr. Williams's Library, London. I have transcribed fo. 147, which relates to Bristol. A few additional details concerning Bristol, drawn from fos. 99 and 102, are incorporated in my transcript in parentheses and referred to in the footnotes to the document.

² John Creasey, *Index to the John Evans List of Dissenting Congregations and Ministers 1715–1729*, Dr. Williams's Library, Occasional Paper no. 11 (1964), p. 3; James E. Bradley, 'Nonconformity and the Electorate in Eighteenth-Century England,' *Parliamentary History*, VI (1987), pp. 238, 241–2.

cannot be equated with any clearcut division between Arminian and Calvinist beliefs; the differences were more a matter of style than of doctrine.³ The Bristol section of the Evans List is one of only five counties for which information is recorded on the Quakers. This is appropriate since the Quaker meeting at Bristol was the largest in England.⁴ But because the Society of Friends was quite distinct from the other dissenting groups in doctrine and practice, and did not combine with them for worship, their details are added at the bottom of the document.⁵

Bristol, though a centre of Anglican worship, with a well-developed parish structure, had been a stronghold of nonconformity since the dissenting congregations had broken away from the Established Church in 1640. During the Restoration period these groups flourished despite intolerance and persecution.⁶ The only large-scale enumeration of dissenters in the city at that period is provided by the so-called Compton Census of 1676, which only covers fourteen of the parishes. It suggests that there were at least 620 dissenters in Bristol, forming about 11.2 per cent of the recorded inhabitants over 16; the three parishes unrecorded might perhaps have brought the total to nearly 700. This is a considerably smaller proportion than that suggested by the Evans List, but the estimates of dissent in 1676 were probably conservative, with many partial conformists who attended both Anglican and dissenting churches not appearing as nonconformists.⁷ By contrast the 'hearers' estimated in the Evans List probably included many such partial or occasional conformists, especially among the Presbyterians and Independents. It remains quite probable, however, that the number and wealth of nonconformists increased over the next three or four decades. The Evans List suggests that there were between 3800 and 4300 dissenters⁸ in Bristol worth about £770,000, plus around 2000 Quakers

³ James E. Bradley, *Religion, Revolution and English Radicalism: Non-conformity in Eighteenth-Century Politics and Society* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 1; Jonathan Barry, 'The Parish in Civic Life: Bristol and its Churches 1640–1750' in Susan Wright (ed.), *Parish, Church and People: Local Studies in Lay Religion, 1350–1750* (1988), pp. 160–1.

⁴ Nicholas Rogers, *Whigs and Cities: Popular Politics in the Age of Walpole and Pitt* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 268–9. For the role of the Quakers in Bristol in this period see Russell Mortimer, *Early Bristol Quakerism: The Society of Friends in the City 1654–1700*, Bristol branch of the Historical Association, pamphlet no. 17 (Bristol, 1967), and idem (ed.), *Minute Book of the Men's Meeting of the Society of Friends in Bristol, 1686–1704* (Bristol Record Society, XXX, 1977).

⁵ Bradley, *Religion, Revolution and English Radicalism*, p. 53.

⁶ The progress of Dissent in seventeenth-century Bristol can be traced in Roger Hayden (ed.), *The Records of a Church of Christ in Bristol, 1640–1687* (Bristol Record Society, XXVII, 1974); Barry, 'The Parish in Civic Life,' pp. 152–78; Jonathan Barry, 'The Politics of Religion in Restoration Bristol' in Tim Harris, Paul Seaward and Mark Goldie (eds.), *The Politics of Religion in Restoration England* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 163–89; and David Harris Sacks, *The Widening Gate: Bristol and the Atlantic Economy, 1450–1700* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1991).

⁷ Anne Whiteman (ed.), *The Compton Census of 1676: A Critical Edition*, Records of Social and Economic History, New Series, X (Oxford, 1986), pp. lxxvi–lxxvii, 547–51.

⁸ See note 18 on the text for the alternative figures for the Baptist congregations of 1200 and 1700 hearers; the lower figure is more likely.

whose wealth was not less than £500,000. Altogether these non-conformists made up more than twenty per cent of an estimated Bristol population of 28,170, which was about twice the national average.⁹ The Presbyterians and Independents together accounted for 9.22 per cent, the Quakers 6.11 per cent and the Baptists between 4.26 and 6 per cent.¹⁰

One cannot say for certain whether the dissenting interest grew, declined or remained largely static in the years after 1715, because good estimates of their numerical strength are lacking. Bishop Secker's visitation returns for 1735 record some or many dissenters in most Bristol parishes, although the revised figures offered in 1766–7 and 1784 suggest some falling away of numbers in most of the smaller parishes, though not in the ever-growing suburbs of St James and St Philip and Jacob, where most of the meeting houses were based.¹¹ There was a broad continuity in the congregational life of old dissent, with all the congregations recorded in 1715 continuing to cater to their Presbyterian, Independent and Baptist congregations. One new Baptist church was established at Callowhill Street, although it did not survive beyond the 1780s, and a short-lived Independent congregation, closely associated with the Broadmead Baptists, was also formed in 1757. Such churches reflected the close bonds formed between congregations and ministers, as well as the strains created when a new minister brought a different style and, perhaps, a different theology. As in the early years of the century, Bristol's stock of dissenting ministers collaborated in preaching to each other's congregations, identifying a common tradition despite divergences on some issues; only the Quakers stood outside this tradition.¹²

The political and social leadership of this interest was, however, taken increasingly by the Lewin's Mead chapel. The Evans List already shows this as the largest and richest congregation (excluding the Quakers) with 1600 hearers and a computed worth of £400,000. Some of their members were already prominent in civic affairs and, despite problems caused by the political disabilities faced by dissenters, they came to play an ever more dominant part in Bristol civic politics after about 1735, providing many of the mayors, aldermen and common councillors and several of the city's MPs.¹³ The Tucker Street meeting (variously regarded as Presbyterian or Independent) and the Castle Green meeting in Castle precincts together added another 1,000 hearers

⁹ Rogers, *Whigs and Cities*, p. 269.

¹⁰ Michael R. Watts, *The Dissenters: From the Reformation to the French Revolution* (Oxford, 1978), pp. 241–2.

¹¹ Elizabeth Ralph (ed.), 'Bishop Secker's Diocese Book' in Patrick McGrath (ed.), *A Bristol Miscellany* (Bristol Record Society, XXXVII, 1985), pp. 21–69.

¹² See the histories of the various congregations listed before the notes on the text, together with Barry, 'Parish in Civic Life'.

¹³ Ronald H. Quilici, 'Turmoil in a City and an Empire: Bristol's Factions 1700–1775' (University of New Hampshire Ph.D. dissertation, 1976) ch. 6; Bradley, *Religion, Revolution and English Radicalism*, pp. 195–239; William C. Braithwaite, *The Second Period of Quakerism* (2nd edn., Cambridge, 1961), p. 101.

and £160–170,000. The two Baptist congregations at the Pithay in Christchurch parish and at Broadmead in St James had another 1200–1700 hearers in 1715 and were worth about £210,000.¹⁴ All these other chapels had rich and influential members, active in the Society of Merchant Venturers, but they were undoubtedly overshadowed by Lewin's Mead in civic affairs, which the wealthy Quakers largely eschewed until late in the century.

In one area, however, all these groups were active, and that was as members of Bristol's parliamentary electorate. About 700 members of the dissenting congregations could vote for the city of Bristol, which is about 17 per cent of the residential electorate in 1715, without allowing for the substantial Quaker vote.¹⁵ Furthermore, as is noted, their 'estates and interest in trade' could 'make many hundred more votes' in Bristol and elsewhere. Even if all these votes were given to the Whig party, which is assumed here (probably correctly in the vast majority of cases), it is only if influence as well as actual votes is considered that Noble's claim that 'the strength of all the dissenters in Bristol may justly be reckoned much more than that of all the Low-Church party there' could possibly be justified: in the 1715 election about 1900 people voted for the Whigs. It must be remembered when evaluating the claims in this document that its intention was to stress the strength of dissent. To emphasise this point, the voting strength and influence of Bristol's dissenters in the surrounding English counties (Gloucestershire, with 72 or more votes, Somerset with 50 or more, Wiltshire, Herefordshire and Monmouthshire) as well as in Wales, were indicated. But no clear breakdown was attempted for the individual congregations.

Given the incentive to exaggeration, how accurate is the information contained in the Evans List? Michael Watts has undertaken comprehensive research to test the accuracy of the numbers of nonconformists, and has concluded that here, as in other counties, it is substantially accurate. For example, although the Broadmead Baptist church only had a membership of 86 in 1724, a fifth of the hearers listed by Evans in 1715, the burial registers of the Broadmead church suggest that the size of the Baptist community in early eighteenth-century Bristol was, if anything, actually larger than the entries in the Evans List, and the baptismal registers of the two Bristol Baptist congregations also indicate a joint community of some 1573 people. Similarly, the Quaker burial registers suggest that 1720 Friends were living in Bristol, which bears comparison with the estimate of 2,000 by Noble, who would not have known the Quaker community as well as he did the other chapels.¹⁶ Even so, these figures are likely to be more accurate than those provided by the Anglican clergy, which are often very imprecise and the Evans List remains the most important set of

¹⁴ The parish locations of the meeting houses are conveniently given in Bradley, *Religion, Revolution and English Radicalism*, p. 248 n. 66.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 207; Bradley, 'Nonconformity and the Electorate', p. 242.

¹⁶ Watts, *The Dissenters*, pp. 495–500, 504, 506.

estimates of the strength of dissent in England and Wales before the so-called 'Religious Census' of 1851.

As well as providing a snapshot of the position in 1715, however, the List also incorporates later information on the new ministers of the chapels until *circa* 1729. In the case of Bristol, as the notes to the text indicate, these should be regarded with caution. Even when supplemented with material on other folios, the List is only updated properly for the three Presbyterian and Independent congregations (even here one brief incumbent is omitted), while no changes are recorded for the two Baptist chapels. In addition, several other dissenting clergymen appear to have been preaching in Bristol, judging by evidence in the quarter-sessions records.¹⁷ Some of these may have been assisting in the recognised chapels or in the countryside nearby, but there may have been shadowy alternative chapels, with obscure memberships, operating as well. One such, in Callowhill Street, was recorded in 1727 as being for an 'Anabaptist' congregation. It only lasted a few months and its preacher, a husbandman called Jacob Mower, was subsequently derided in an address to the Bristol Grand Jury, but this may have been the precursor to the Baptist meeting in the same street in later decades.¹⁸

Finally, in connection with the other texts in this volume, it should be remembered that the dissenting congregations, as well as the Anglican parishes, were much affected by the evangelical revival and the planting of Methodist churches and societies. The Methodists, especially those of Calvinist persuasion such as George Whitefield, attracted considerable support from both the clergy and laity of the nonconformist churches and Whitefield's Tabernacle, opened in 1753, can be considered another dissenting chapel. The Wesleyans also attracted some dissenters into their societies, although they resisted pressures to establish separate congregations until the 1790s (see the introduction to William Pine's letters below). The evangelistic dimension in old dissent was certainly stimulated by Methodism and many of these congregations were reaching out to the previously neglected groups targeted by the Methodists. However, if the clergy's visitation returns can be believed, it was the Methodists whose numbers were growing rapidly in the later eighteenth century.¹⁹

¹⁷ Bristol Record Office 04493 (3) under November 1714, when the subscribers are Gough, Pope, Noble, Andrew and Emmanuel Gifford, Jope, Ketterel, Catcott and one John Harris. In January 1716 Andrew Tibbutt and *John Kitterel* take the oaths and in February 1716 Robert Brayne, teacher in a Baptist congregation.

¹⁸ Bristol Record Office 04450 (2) under February 1727, Jacob Mower husbandman takes the oaths as preacher of a separate congregation under the denomination of Anabaptists, using a new-built tenement in Callowhill Street lately erected by William Sherman haltermaker as a place for an Anabaptist congregation to worship. William Cann's address refers contemptuously to 'a fellow just from the plough and countenanced by a journeyman weaver only' whose chapel had soon become a stable (G. Lamoine (ed.), *Charges to the Grand Jury 1689–1803* (Camden Society, 4th series, XLIII, 1992), p. 226).

¹⁹ Ralph, 'Bishop Secker's Diocese Book', pp. 34–50, 66–7.

Account of the City of Bristol 1717 Given in by Mr. Barrington¹ from a Letter of Mr. Noble²

Ministers	Number of Hearers	Quality and Substance	Voters for Bristol	– for Gloucestershire	– for Somersetshire	– for other Counties	– for other Cities and Boroughs
Isaac Noble [John Alexander ³] [Pitts ⁴] [William Vawdrey ⁵]	About 500	Several of them are Persons of Condition; divers of them rich; many more very substantiall; and very few of them poor. The whole Congregation is reckoned worth £100,000.	A considerable Number of them, both as Freeholders and Freemen, are Voters for Members for Bristol; and are included in the Totall at the bottom.	Several such; included in the Totall at bottom.	Several such; included in the Totall at bottom.	Several have Votes for Wiltshire, Monmouthshire, Herefordshire, and some counties in Wales: but the exact number not obtained.	Tis believed that some have votes in divers places: but the Account not yet given in.
Michael Pope ⁶ dyd Oct. 28 1718 John Diaper ⁷ Samuel Bury ⁸ 1720	About 1600	Some have been sheriffs of the City, and put themselves out of the Council because of the Occasionall Act: ⁹ Several others Persons of Condition; divers very rich; many more very substantiall; few poor. The whole Congregation computed worth near £400,000.	A large Number of them as Freeholders and Freemen; included in the Totall at Bottom.	Many such; included in the Totall at the bottom.	Many such; included in the Totall at the bottom.	Several have Votes for Wiltshire, Monmouthshire, Herefordshire, etc. But the exact Account not given in.	Several for Gloucester, Tewkesbury, etc.
John Catcott ¹⁰ dead 1720 Strickland	About 500	Divers of them rich; and a considerable	A good number of them, as Freeholders and	Many such; included in the Totall at	Many such; included in the Totall at	Severall such.	Severall.

Gough, ¹¹ deceased Walter Furze, ¹² 1718, removed to Exeter. William Fisher, ¹³ 1720 [Rainer ¹⁴]	number Substantiall. The whole Congregation computed worth between £60 and £70,000.	Freemen; included in the Total at Bottom.	Bottom.	bottom.	
Andrew Gifford ¹⁵ About 1200 ¹⁸ Emanuel Gifford ¹⁶ Jonathan Owen ¹⁷	Severall rich; a great number very Substantiall. The whole Congregation computed worth about £160,000.	A considerable number of them as Freeholders and Freemen; included in the Total at Bottom.	Severall such; included in the Total at Bottom.	Several Such; included in the Total at Bottom.	Severall have Votes for Wiltshire, Monmouthshire, Herefordshire, Wales etc. The exact Account not yet given in.
Caleb Job ¹⁹ Ketterel ²⁰	About 4 or 500 Some rich; a considerable number Substantiall. The whole Congregation computed worth about £50,000.	Many as Freeholders and Freemen: Included in the Total at Bottom.	Several Such; included in the Total at Bottom.	Several Such; included in the Total at Bottom.	Severall for Monmouthshire, Herefordshire, Wales, etc. but the Account not yet obtained.
Total 4300	Worth £770,000	Total 700 or upwards.	Total 72 or upwards. Low- Church can hardly make up 30.	Total 50 or upwards. Low- Church not near that number.	

N.B. That besides the Number of about 700 voters or upward for Bristol, many of these by their Estates and Interest in Trade, can make many 100 more Votes (upon an Election) in Bristol, Gloucestershire, Somersetshire, Monmouthshire, Herefordshire, Wales; the Cities of Gloucester and Hereford, the town of Monmouth etc. Many of them also as Merchants pay large Sums yearly for Customs to the Crown. Many others are great promoters of the Woolen Manufacture. And severall have Estates fit for Justices of the Peace.

N.B. There is also in Bristol a great Body of Quakers, who are generally well-affected to the present Government, and large Traders and very rich. Their Number may be supposed about 2000 and upwards: and their wealth not less than £500,000. And the Strength of all the Dissenters in Bristol may justly be reckoned much more than that of all the Low-Church Party there.

N.B. These notes on the Bristol ministers are based on the following publications: *Dictionary of National Biography*; M. Caston, *Independency in Bristol* (1860); J. Creasey, *Index to the John Evans List of Dissenting Congregations and Ministers 1715–1729* (Occasional Paper no. 11, Dr Williams's Library, 1964); G.E. Evans, *Vestiges of Protestant Dissent* (Liverpool, 1897); J.G. Fuller, *The Rise and Progress of Dissent in Bristol; chiefly in relation to the Broadmead Church* (1840); A. Gordon (ed.), *Freedom after Ejection* (Manchester, 1917); O.M. Griffiths, 'Records of Lewin's Mead Chapel, Bristol', *Transactions Unitarian Historical Society*, VI (1935–6); G. Hamlin, 'The Pithay Chapel, Bristol', *Baptist Quarterly*, N.S. XV (1953–4); R. Hayden (ed.), *The Records of a Church of Christ in Bristol, 1640–1687* (Bristol Record Society, XXVII, 1974); F. Essex Lewis, 'Broadmead Records', *Baptist Quarterly*, N.S. X (1940–1); J. Murch, *A History of the Presbyterian and General Baptist Churches in the West of England* (1835); J.W. Ashley Smith, *The Birth of Modern Education* (1954). They also draw on Josiah Thompson's 'History of the Protestant Dissenting Congregations', 5 vols c. 1772, in Dr Williams's Library (MS.38.7–11) and the subscriptions of dissenting ministers in quarter sessions (04449(2–3)) and Lewin's Mead records (6687(1–2)) in Bristol Record Office.

¹ John Shute Barrington, later first Viscount Barrington; b. 1678 d. 1734. Lawyer, Christian apologist and writer in favour of the dissenting interest; M.P. for Berwick-upon-Tweed, 1715–23. In 1713 married Anne, daughter of Sir William Daines, Whig M.P. for Bristol 1701–10 and 1715–22.

² b. 1659 d. 1727. Pastor of the Castle Green chapel from 1689 until shortly before his death, with various joint ministers (George Fownes 1708–15).

³ Fo. 99 of the Evans list includes 'John Alexander 1719 removed to Stratford'. Minister at Castle Green chapel from 1716 to 1726 when he went to Stratford; d. 1743. Educated at Glasgow University and noted for his oriental and patristic learning.

⁴ Fo. 99 of the Evans list includes 'Pitts 1725 removed 1728'. He presumably served as minister at Castle Green Chapel after Alexander's departure; this may be Aaron Pitts who was minister at Chard in 1715.

⁵ Fo. 99 of the Evans list includes 'Will. Vawdrey 1728.' Pastor of the Castle Green chapel, 1728–1740; b. 1695 d. 1740. Suspected of Arianism; some of his congregation seceded on his arrival and unsuccessfully invited Philip Doddridge to become their pastor (*Historical Manuscripts Commission Joint Publication 26. Correspondence of Philip Doddridge*, no. 307).

⁶ b. c. 1675 d. 1718. Pastor of Lewin's Mead chapel, 1705–18.

⁷ Minister at Lewin's Mead chapel, as assistant between 1710 and 1718 (when ordained), and pastor 1718–51. During his ministry 'large additions were made to the congregation'.

⁸ b. 1663 d. 1730. Minister at Lewin's Mead chapel between 1720 and his death, when William Richards became assistant minister.

⁹ After the Occasional Conformity Act was passed in December 1711, three Common Councillors from Lewin's Mead Chapel (Abraham Hooke, Morgan Smith and Onesiphorus Tyndall) resigned in 1712 rather than face a £40 fine and disqualification from office for attending a dissenting meeting after taking the Anglican sacrament (to qualify for office under the Test Act of 1673). The Act of 1711 was repealed in 1718. Other Lewin's Mead members, such as Abraham Elton, did not resign.

¹⁰ d. 1719. Pastor of Tucker Street Chapel from 1703 or before until 1719; had preached occasionally at Lewin's Mead from c. 1694.

¹¹ d. 1718. Assistant minister at Lewin's Mead chapel 1699–1710; co-pastor of Tucker Street chapel between 1710 and 1717. Father of his more famous namesake, who published *An Enquiry into the Causes of the Decay of the Dissenting Interest* (1730), before conforming to the established church.

¹² d. 1722. Minister at Tucker Street chapel, 1718–19. Resigned on account of ill health (when he was briefly replaced by Joshua Jones 1719–20) and then removed to Exeter.

¹³ d. 1732. Pastor of Tucker Street chapel, 1720–32. Fo. 99 of the Evans list includes 'Will. Fisher 1721' rather than 1720.

¹⁴ Fo. 99 of the Evans List includes 'Rainer 1722', referring to Kirby Reyner, who served jointly with Fisher from 1721 and was minister until his death in 1744.

¹⁵ b. 1642 d. 1721. Pastor at the Pithay chapel from 1677 until his death. Known as 'the apostle of the West' for his preaching in the towns and villages around Bristol. Imprisoned four times during the reign of Charles II; intended to join Monmouth's rebellion but prevented by retreat of rebel forces from Bristol. A collection of his manuscript sermons can be found in Angus Library, Regents Park College, Oxford; for the Gifford family see L.G. Champion, *Farthing Rushlight* (1961), a biography of Dr Andrew Gifford (1700–84).

¹⁶ b. 1673 d. 1724. Son of Andrew Gifford and father of Dr Andrew Gifford. Ordained an elder in 1705 and pastor at Pithay chapel from 1721 to 1723. In July 1723 William Bazley (d. 1736) became joint pastor and in November 1723 he was joined as pastor by John Beddome (d. 1757).

¹⁷ d. 1725. Assistant at Pithay chapel and also, from 1721, a lecturer on Sundays at Broadmead chapel.

¹⁸ Although a figure of 1200 hearers is given for the Pithay chapel, on fo. 102 the Pithay chapel is credited with 750 hearers and the Broadmead chapel 450 hearers, which makes a total of 1200 for *both* Baptist congregations. It therefore seems probable that 450 Baptists were counted twice here and in the total of 4300, which would otherwise be 3850.

¹⁹ Caleb Jope. Assistant minister to Ketterell at Broadmead chapel, where he acted as tutor to potential Baptist ministers (to prepare for which he had been sent to Tewkesbury Academy at church expense c. 1710). This proved unsuccessful. He left for Exeter in 1719 and was replaced in 1720 by Bernard Foskett, who acted as tutor and minister until his death in 1758, establishing a high reputation for the Bristol academy (later Bristol Baptist College).

²⁰ d. 1727. Peter Ketterell. Pastor of Broadmead chapel between 1707 and his death. He was replaced in 1726 or 1727 by Dr Andrew Gifford, who served until 1729, assisting Foskett with his academy.

**METHODIST TESTIMONIALS FOR BRISTOL
COLLECTED BY CHARLES WESLEY IN 1742**

Edited by Kenneth Morgan

METHODIST TESTIMONIALS COLLECTED BY CHARLES WESLEY IN 1742

The six testimonials printed here were collected by Charles Wesley in 1742. They comprise the only manuscript material of this sort relating to Bristol for that date, and can be found in a volume that has been little used by historians.¹ Though not always secure in their use of grammar and syntax, the testimonials are nevertheless a valuable source for understanding the impact of Wesleyan preaching on ordinary people in Bristol. They are reproduced here for the insight they provide into the spiritual experience of early Methodist converts. The preamble to some of the testimonials indicates that Charles Wesley intended these people to record their religious experiences in detail, as precisely as possible. This accounts for the length of some of the documents. All the testimonials record the experiences of women, who were prominent in the Methodist bands and classes in Bristol.² It is not known who wrote the accounts, but it is likely that some were taken down by clerks and that others, especially those composed as letters, were written by the women themselves. The testimonials reveal that these women were already pious Christians who attended parish churches and the various religious societies that flourished in Bristol, under Anglican control,

¹ The original documents can be found in the Methodist Church Archives, John Rylands University Library of Manchester, Early Methodist volume (Black folio), fos. 51, 53, 87, 126, 128–9. For a similar testimonial from Bristol, collected by Charles Wesley in 1762, see the ‘Account of the conversion and death of Joanna Mussell,’ in *ibid.*, fo. 112. For a printed testimonial of this sort see Charles Wesley, *A Short Account of the Death of Mrs Hannah Richardson* (1741). There is a brief analysis of these documents in John W. Raimo, ‘Spiritual Harvest: The Anglo-American Revival in Boston, Massachusetts, and Bristol, England, 1739–1742’ (University of Wisconsin Ph.D. dissertation, 1974), pp. 186–7. Similar contemporary testimonials, covering the Cambuslang Revival of 1742, have been analysed extensively by historians: see Arthur Fawcett, *The Cambuslang Revival: The Scottish Evangelical Revival of the Eighteenth Century* (1971); T. C. Smout, ‘Born again at Cambuslang: New Evidence on Popular Religion and Literacy in Eighteenth-Century Scotland,’ *Past and Present*, no. 97 (1982), pp. 114–27; and Ned Landsman, ‘Evangelists and their Hearers: Popular Interpretation of Revivalist Preaching in Eighteenth-Century Scotland’, *Journal of British Studies*, XXVIII (1989), pp. 120–49.

² Raimo, ‘Spiritual Harvest,’ p. 193.

before the Methodist revival began. Unfortunately, however, very little biographical information on these writers has survived in the vast array of printed works available on Methodism. The earliest membership list that survives for the United Society in Bristol, dated 1741, is damaged and contains only the names of men.³

Bristol was a major centre of early Methodist preaching. In 1739 John Wesley informed Dr. Joseph Butler, the bishop of Bristol, that he could 'advance the glory of God and the salvation of souls better in Bristol than anywhere else.'⁴ He began his itinerant mission by preaching in the open air at Bristol, soon began to organise class meetings for Methodists in the city, and carried out much pastoral work among the artisans and colliers in Bristol and nearby Kingswood. Charles Wesley assisted his brother in open-air preaching, in writing hymns, and in administering the sacraments at Bristol when John was away on his itinerant mission.⁵ The testimonials printed here were drawn up during the initial surge of Methodist activity in Bristol, and they refer to the main locations of Methodist preaching in and around the city. There are references to indoor religious societies that operated in Bristol when the Methodists arrived on the scene. These include the societies in Baldwin Street and Nicholas Street, about which we know very little.⁶ Indoor venues of the Methodists are also mentioned, including the New Room, near St. James's churchyard in the Horsefair, the oldest Methodist building in the world; Newgate in Little Wine Street, the prison in Bristol that witnessed many visits by the Methodists; and the Weavers' Hall, near Temple church, a meeting place of one of the Bristol religious societies with which George Whitefield had been associated. There are also references to John and Charles Wesley and Whitefield preaching at Clifton church and St. Nicholas church, a useful reminder that 'The People called Methodists,' as they styled themselves, were an adjunct to the Church of England and not a nonconformist denomination at this

³ Henry J. Foster, 'Bristol Methodist Notes: The United Bristol Society in 1741', *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* (hereafter cited as *Proc. W.H.S.*), IV (1903–04), p. 92. Only two of the six writers of testimonials printed here can be identified, and one of these not definitively: see notes on Susannah Designe and Elizabeth Sayce.

⁴ Wesley's interview with Bishop Butler, 16 Aug. 1739, in W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater (eds.), *The Works of John Wesley: vol. 19: Journal and Diaries II (1738–43)* (Nashville, Tennessee, 1990), p. 472.

⁵ Among the extensive literature on Methodism in Georgian Bristol see Raimo, 'Spiritual Harvest'; John S. Pawlyn, *Bristol Methodism in John Wesley's Day* (Bristol, 1877); W. A. Goss, 'Early Methodism in Bristol, with special reference to John Wesley's visits to the city, 1739–1790, and their impression on the people', in nine parts, *Proc. W.H.S.*, XIX (1933–34), pp. 30–7, 57–65, 81–8, 101–5, 133–42, 161–8, 183–8, and XX (1935), pp. 1–9, 25–30; Maldwyn Edwards, *The Wesleys in Bristol* (Leeds, 1974); and Kenneth Morgan, *John Wesley and Bristol*, Bristol branch of the Historical Association, pamphlet no. 75 (Bristol, 1990).

⁶ Rupert E. Davies (ed.), *The Works of John Wesley: vol. 9: The Methodist Societies: History, Nature, Design* (Nashville, Tennessee, 1989), p. 10. The Baldwin and Nicholas street societies combined to form the United Society, which was based at the New Room from 3 June 1739 (Maldwyn Edwards, *New Room* [Leeds, 1972], p. 3).

stage. Then there are references to the open-air places where Methodists attracted some of their largest audiences in Bristol – Rose Green, Temple Backs, the Bowling Green, and the Brickyard on St. Philip's Plain.⁷ The fact that our writers attended both the open-air meetings and the indoor societies reflects the Methodists' ability to congregate wherever hearers could be found, which followed John Wesley's dictum that the whole world was his parish.⁸ It also lays emphasis on the pietist and evangelical strains that characterised early Methodism (the indoor societies conforming more to the former type and the outdoor hearers more to the latter).

The testimonials bear witness to several major controversies that beset the early Methodists, both in Bristol and throughout the nation between 1739 and 1742, controversies that led to serious divisions. One contentious matter referred to in the documents is the difference between Arminian and Calvinist doctrine among the Methodists. Elizabeth Downs, Elizabeth Sayce, Elizabeth Halfpenny, Mary Thomas and Naomi Thomas all heard Whitefield preach in Bristol before they encountered the Wesley brothers. To begin with, they received Whitefield's preaching with delight and approved of his doctrine. But they soon found that John Wesley's preaching had a greater impact on them, as if he were teaching a different gospel from what they had heard before. Elizabeth Downs felt that John Wesley's exhortation led the spirit of God to work in her soul, and that it was necessary for him to be present in Bristol for this to happen.⁹ Elizabeth Halfpenny initially thought John Wesley was a Roman Catholic, probably because he was devoted to an apostolic view of the church and laid great emphasis on spirituality, the need for good works, and pastoral care. But she was soon won over by his preaching, and later confessed that her soul was never at rest until she was in his presence and heard him talked about.¹⁰ Naomi Thomas heard John Wesley after listening to the preaching of Whitefield, and noted that it was 'Another Gospel, in comparison of what I heard before'.¹¹ Mary Thomas, after hearing John Wesley, thought it was 'the true Gospel of Christ that he preacht'.¹² Elizabeth Sayce testified to the personal effect of John Wesley's preaching. She was 'quickened and strengthened considerably' when he came to exhort in Bristol.¹³

These plaudits are testimony to the personal power of John Wesley to reach individuals, as if the Christian message were directed personally

⁷ The location of Methodist preaching places in Bristol is given in Goss, 'Early Methodism in Bristol', pt. V, *Proc. W.H.S.* (1934), pp. 133–42, and Frederick C. Gill, *In the Steps of John Wesley* (London, 1962), pp. 70–8.

⁸ John Wesley to 'Dear Sir', 11 June 1739, in Ward and Heitzenrater (eds.), *Journal and Diaries II*, p. 67.

⁹ See below, pp. 86–7.

¹⁰ See below, p. 92.

¹¹ See below, p. 99.

¹² See below, p. 103.

¹³ See below, pp. 97–8.

to those people alone. They were probably not connected particularly to the style of preaching, since contemporary evidence suggests that Whitefield was as flamboyant and vivid a preacher as any of his colleagues.¹⁴ They were linked more to the matter of doctrine, for Whitefield believed that Methodists should follow a Calvinist belief in predestination, the Elect, and the difficulty of achieving salvation, whereas the Wesleyan message was one of free will, justification by faith, a new birth in Christ, and salvation for all mankind. Calvinist Methodists believed in the doctrine of infallible perseverance, according to which believers in Christ could not fall from grace. Arminian Methodists, on the other hand, considered that man could fall from grace if he lost his Christian faith.¹⁵ Two testimonials include disapproving references to the Methodist preaching of John Cennick and William Seward, both of whom became strict Calvinists.¹⁶ Cennick was one of the first Methodist preachers in the Bristol area, while Seward, who came to Bristol in 1740, was the friend and travelling companion of Whitefield.¹⁷ Charles Wesley recorded in his journal how both he and his brother were bitterly opposed by Seward, and how Cennick condemned the authority of the Wesleys at Kingswood school.¹⁸ The latter incident explains Elizabeth Halfpenny's reference to 'underhand dealings' by Cennick.¹⁹ In 1740 Cennick and his supporters were ejected by John Wesley from the band society at Kingswood. In October 1740 Seward died after being hit by a stone thrown at him by a member of an anti-Methodist mob.²⁰ Wesley and Whitefield's societies developed independently at Bristol as a result of the Calvinist/Arminian divide. The Wesleyans gained the upper hand, however, partly because they secured the New Room to themselves and partly because they conducted regular preaching in the area while Whitefield was absent abroad for a long time.²¹

Another controversial matter covered by the testimonials consisted of visions and convulsions that occurred when the Wesleys and others preached in Bristol. These occurrences came at moments when people

¹⁴ E.g. A.C.H. Seymour, *The Life and Times of Selina Countess of Huntingdon*, 2 vols. (1844), I, pp. 354–5.

¹⁵ See John Wesley's sermon *Free Grace* (Bristol, 1740) and George Whitefield's reply, *A Letter to the Reverend Mr. John Wesley: In Answer to his Sermon entitled Free-Grace* (1741). For modern discussions of the doctrinal divide see Raimo, 'Spiritual Harvest', pp. 182–5; Morgan, *John Wesley and Bristol*, pp. 9–10; and Michael R. Watts, *The Dissenters: From the Reformation to the French Revolution* (Oxford, 1978), pp. 428–34.

¹⁶ See below, pp.

¹⁷ William Leary, 'John Cennick, 1718–55: A Bicentenary Appreciation', *Proc. W.H.S.*, XXX (1955–6), p. 32; Luke Tyerman, *The Life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley M.A.*, 3 vols. (New York, 1872), I, p. 296.

¹⁸ Thomas Jackson (ed.), *The Journal of the Rev. Charles Wesley, M.A.*, 2 vols. (1849), I, 22 Sept. and 30 Nov. 1740, pp. 249–50, 263.

¹⁹ See below, p. 94.

²⁰ Leary, 'John Cennick', pp. 33–4; *The Life of Mr. J. Cennick* (2nd edn., Bristol 1745), p. 37.

²¹ Josiah Tucker, *A Brief History of the Principles of Methodism* (Oxford, 1742), pp. 41–3.

felt that they experienced redemption. Naomi Thomas felt such a sensation when, on hearing John Wesley preach at Clifton church, she felt her bones fall out of joint and was afraid that she might expose herself before the congregation.²² Once when the sacraments were being conducted at Kingswood, Elizabeth Halfpenny saw a vision of a tall white-haired parson in his surplice. He soon vanished, but she sensed that at the moment she saw him, the word of God flowed into her and she was justified. She considered that she had experienced Christian perfection while still alive. When John Wesley later expounded at Rose Green, she felt that she received forgiveness of sins, and that the word of God came with such power that she seemed to be lifted off the ground.²³ Elizabeth Sayce had a vision of God during the Methodist preaching, and also observed people being taken 'with violent fits of Conviction.'²⁴

The most detailed description of visions and convulsions is in Elizabeth Downs' account. When listening to a Presbyterian minister, John Diaper, preach the sacraments, she felt that Christ revealed himself to her at his crucifixion. She saw blood running down his arms, a pale body, and a gasping mouth uttering its last breath. At the minister's mention of the cross, she experienced an inward and outward change, and thought that she had been convulsed. She then believed that she was justified. Elizabeth Downs also groaned, felt pain and had to lie on the floor when John Wesley preached. She thought she had death pangs, but felt released as soon as the preaching stopped. When attending a band meeting, she saw a vision of the Lord in a snow-white garment. She felt that she received justification and forgiveness of her sins, and noted that every sinew and joint of her body was affected. On another occasion, in private prayer, she saw Christ holding out his left hand with a bright crown. She thought that she floated out of her body and that she achieved redemption when she had a vision of the Lord in a garment as white as snow. Her account provides one further example of spiritual restlessness, for her soul felt transported to another region when Joseph Humphreys preached.²⁵

The nature and desirability of the visions and paroxysms became matters of dispute among the Methodists. John Wesley believed that such dramatic changes in behaviour reflected God's power to transform anguish and despair into a cleansing of sins and a sense of peace and joy. He cited scriptural authority for his viewpoint.²⁶ Some of his family and close colleagues nevertheless criticised the groans, tears and mystical experiences as a disreputable way of gaining converts. They considered that Wesley's endorsement of these phenomena would

²² See below, p. 99.

²³ See below, p. 94.

²⁴ See below, pp. 95, 98.

²⁵ See below, pp. 87–90.

²⁶ John Wesley to Samuel Wesley jun., 10 May 1739, in Frank Baker, (ed.), *The Works of John Wesley: vol. 25: Letters I* (Oxford, 1980), p. 646; John Whitehead, *The Life of the Rev. John Wesley*, 2 vols. (1793), II, p. 101.

discredit Methodism and induce naive people to think that they could be justified instantaneously.²⁷ They were particularly concerned at the frequency of convulsions in Bristol in 1739 and 1740.²⁸ And they were aware that such incidents often occurred when John Wesley expounded the idea of Christian perfection – the notion that a true believer's heart might eventually be filled with humble love and constant communion with God.²⁹ John Wesley himself recognised these problems, and cautioned against religious fervour.³⁰ His acceptance of cries and swoons as a natural human response to divine intervention and to fears of death and judgement certainly led to controversy, but also stimulated the evangelical mission to our six writers and to many other people.³¹

Apart from their value as a guide to controversies associated with the birth of Methodism, the six testimonials generally convey a strong sense of the spiritual state of their authors and of the individual, personal nature of the religious awakening connected with the experience of new birth. All of the people believed in the existence of Heaven and Hell, death and eternity, salvation and damnation, original sin and redemption. They were people who constantly tried to resist the temptation to become backsliders, and who realised the need for personal holiness. They earnestly desired to be granted the grace of God. The documents convey their doubts and fears, their spiritual longings and their response, both inwardly, in relation to their soul, and outwardly, in connection with their physical well-being, to specific passages in Scripture. The need for private prayer and quiet contemplation of one's spiritual state is combined with a sense of joy in hymn singing and in meeting fellow Methodists in the religious societies and bands of Bristol. The power of God to change the nature of these people is vividly portrayed, as, conversely, is the heaviness and sorrow caused by the absence of God. One has a sense of the flickering conscience of these people, the ebb and flow of religious feeling, and in this sense the documents take us as near as we are ever likely to come to the meaning of the early Methodist crusade.

²⁷ E.g. Samuel Wesley jun. to John Wesley, 3 Sept. 1739, in Baker (ed.), *Letters I*, pp. 681–2; Mr. Whitefield to a friend of his at London, 25 Apr. 1740, in *The Weekly History; or, An Account of the most Remarkable Particulars relating to the Present Progress of the Gospel*, no. 4, p. 1; Raimo, 'Spiritual Harvest', pp. 197–9; Whitehead, *Life of John Wesley*, II, pp. 104–16.

²⁸ E.g. Jackson (ed.), *Journal*, I, 8 Sept. 1739, p. 170; Seymour, *Life and Times*, II, p. 363; John Wesley to James Hutton and the Fetter Lane Society, 9, 21–26, 30 Apr., 7 May 1739, in Baker (ed.), *Letters I*, pp. 627, 637, 640–3; Ward and Heitzenrater (eds.), *Journal and Diaries II*, 26 Apr., 1 July 1739, pp. 51–2, 77.

²⁹ John Wesley, Sermon on 'Christian Perfection', in *The Works of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.*, 14 vols. (3rd edn., 1872), VI, pp. 2–22; Robert Southey, *The Life of Wesley and the Rise and Progress of Methodism*, 2 vols. (New York, 1820), II, p. 134.

³⁰ John Wesley to James Hutton and the Fetter Lane Society, 2 July 1739, in Baker (ed.), *Letters I*, p. 664.

³¹ Jonathan Barry, 'The Cultural Life of Bristol, 1640–1775' (Oxford University D.Phil. thesis, 1985), pp. 283–5; Henry D. Rack, 'Doctors, Demons and Early Methodist Healing', in W. J. Sheils, ed., *The Church and Healing: Studies in Church History*, XIX (Oxford, 1982), pp. 145, 147, 151–2; Watts, *The Dissenters*, pp. 409–21.

1. SUSANNAH DESIGNE¹

Bristol March 18th 1741/2

Dear and Reverend Sir

According to the power the Lord shall give me I will Relate his gracious Dealings with me. Since I Saw you unworthy as I am he Daily poureth Blessings upon me. Great Shame and Confusion of face Doth often Cover me at the Sight of my own vileness. I see it without fear and grieve without pain. I almost Hourly feel the power of God and a Deep sense of my Saviours Love but yet my Heart wanders from him. I want to serve him with a Holy worship and in every thought obey him. I can say Lord thou Knowest all things, thou Knowest I Desire to Love thee.

I find my Hatred to Sin increase and the Least Stirrings thereof is grievous to me but the grace of God is Sufficient for me. I Hunger and thirst after Jesus and although I often feed on the manna of his Divine Love my Soul is not Satisfied therewith for I am not Risen up after his Likeness. I want to Drink out of that fountain till I am filled with all the fullness of God. I find an unspeakable peace yet a wrestless Striving attended with a pleasing pain. My Heart flows with Love and pants and Reaches after God but I am not fully Happy in him. But I doubt not but I shall. O my Blessed Jesus make me Holy then Shall I be Happy in thee. Fulfill these Longing Desires of my Soul and Let me know the Depths of thy Sanctifyin Love.

But O Lord my time my Life my all is in thy hand. Do with me what thou wilt. Only take my Heart unto Self and Let all I am be Lost in thee. I truly Experience I want the Blood of Christ every moment applied to my unrenewed Soul. I feel I hang upon him for I am weak and helpless. O who is strong but those that are Renewed in the Image of God. Yet it is Strength to See my own uneasiness for then I trust in Christ alone.

Much private prayer is profitable to my Soul. At some times it Brings my Soul so near to God till I can power tears of Love and Contrition into my Saviour's Bosom. Then I am tempted to think now I am

¹ Susanna Designe was a schoolmistress, who wrote to John Wesley several times in 1740–1 (see Frank Baker (ed.), *The Works of John Wesley: vol. 26: Letters II (1740–55)* (Oxford, 1982), pp. 64–5, 624, 634), reporting on 12 Aug. 1741 that she would be happy to take over the school in the Horse Fair, ‘for my school is almost come to nothing because the parents of them is persecutors of this mad way, as they call it, and they have taken them almost all from me, except it is some that was in my debt, and they neither pay the weekly money nor make the other shorter’. She was certainly schooling at least one Methodist girl in 1743 (see W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater (eds.), *The Works of John Wesley: Vol. 20: Journal and Diaries III* (Nashville, 1991), pp. 132–4) and she is still listed as a school mistress, at 1 Cross Street, in *Sketchley's Bristol Directory* (Bristol, 1775). The John Rylands collection also includes another account of her religious experience, dated 8 Apr. 1742. This reveals that she had been religiously inclined since the age of seven, when she had begun to delight in reading the scriptures. She had moved to Bristol from the Ely area when 21, where she found herself ‘a little better educated than the rank of people God had now placed me with’. About five years later she heard first Whitefield and then Wesley preach.

[illegible] now I am in earnest. Those thoughts is Dreadful to me for some moments till I throw my Self upon my Dear Jesus and am Helped. O what can Stand before that name Called upon in faith and what Shall become of all my Corruptions when the Lord Shall Come with power to take vengeance on his enemies that would not have him to Reign over them. Surely the time is coming when I shall see them again no more for ever. O that I may not Rest on this Side Jordan or ever think I am any thing but a poor Helpless Sinner waiting at the feet of Jesus till his Cleansing Blood hath washed my Soul from all Sin. I have to have a hope full of Immortality. I Seem as Sure as if I had already Received it. I Listen for the Sound of his feet and hear a voice Saying Surely I come quickly. Even so Lord Jesus Come when thou wilt but O my Jesus Come.

I have Lately Received another Letter from my Dear Sister Sarah Perrin.² It is a great quikning to me. She grows in grace. Daily I find my Love encreases to her and am Drawn to prayer for her. We are greatly united in Spirit and Seem as one Soul. I have great hope the Lord will shew her what is his will in all things that she may be more closely joined to us and become a burning and Shining Light. She is not apprehensive of my writing to you but I Can answer in her Sted. Her Love flows freely towards you and her prayers is not Slackned for you. The more Desirous we are to Love God the more we Love and pray for his ministers. I find a greater Hunger after the word than ever I Did and an increase of Love to you and your Dear Brother and all the Children of God. O that earthly affection may find no place in me but that as I draw nearer and nearer the fountain I may Drink Deeper of the Stream even of that Spirit the Lord hath given you a Double portion off. May he encrease it an Hundred fold.

The Rest of our friends in Stokes Croft pays their Best Respects to you. Mrs Vigor³ bears her trial with great patience. It is the Lords Doing. I hope the work of God goeth on in her Soul. I Believe the Lord took him. Her Heart was Set upon to make Room for himself and he will be more to her than ten Sons. O the abundant Love of God to take one into the Storehouse of the Dead to Drive the Rest to Christ and make them eager to Haste after.

When this Soul was Received into the outward Church by Holy Baptism it was unknown to me. Before I came the power of the Lord

² An evangelical Quaker. A series of letters from Sarah Perrin to John Wesley in 1742–3 are printed in *Arminian Magazine* (1778) pp. 218–27. (They refer to ‘Sally Colston and friends at Stokes Croft’.) Wesley added that Perrin was ‘for some years my housekeeper at Bristol and a mother in Israel. [In 1744 she looked after Wesley’s sister Hetty at the New Room as she convalesced.] I do not know that her marriage increased either her usefulness or her knowledge and love of God’; he had himself organized her marriage to one of his preachers, John Jones, having suggested her a year earlier as a potential bride for his brother Charles. Her letters to Charles until 1778 are in the John Rylands collection. Other undated letters of hers were published in *A Collection of Letters on Sacred Subjects* (Sheffield, 1761).

³ See Thomas Jackson (ed.), *The Journal of the Rev. Charles Wesley, M.A.* 2 vols. (1849), II, p. 398 for a poem on the illness and death of Mrs Elizabeth Vigor.

met me the moment I entered into the place and that Scripture Came to me Cast thy Bread upon the waters and after many Days thou shalt find it⁴ and Looking up to the Lord say what thanks Shalt I Render unto O God for all thy mercies. And while I was yet Speaking the Lord Showed me how to thank him by asking for all the Rest. O what a gracious God have we to Serve Desires no other Return for all his numberless mercies but to ask for more and which way shall I continue faithful but to Look every moment for fresh Supplies of grace to improve that already given.

Dear Sir I Shall be glad to See when it is our Lords will to Send you unto us in the fulness of the Gospel of peace. I find greater ties Both of Love and Duty to your Brother and you than my natural parents after the flesh. O that I may always be obedient as unto the Lord esteeming you very Highly for your works Sake giving all the Glory to God praying for you with all supplication your unworthy Sister

Susannah Designe

Remind me in your prayers

Sister Robertson Davis⁵ and Lucretia Smith⁶ give their Duty to you. Likewise Betty at the New Room.

Sister Perrin writes She thinks to be at Bristol the latter end of next month.

2. ELIZABETH DOWNS⁷

April the 13th 1742

Sir

When your Brother Came to Bristoll first I had not Experienced any thing of the work of God in my Soul though I was a Constant hearer of the word and as duly Communicated. As for Mr. Whitfield I never heard

⁴ Ecclesiastes 11: 1.

⁵ Despite the grammar it seems likely that Robertson and Davis were two different people. A Sister Robertson is mentioned in John Wesley's diary on 10 January and 20 March 1741. In 1751 John Wesley suggested boarding a child at Mrs Robertson's as she was 'a serious prudent woman,' and she is referred to in Charles Wesley's journal for 1748–51 as a devout Kingswood Methodist (Baker (ed.), *Letters II*, p. 470 and n. 8). Anne or 'Nanny Davis', whom John Wesley refers to quite often in his diaries for 1739–41, became one of Charles Wesley's closest friends and he wrote a poem on her death in Nov. 1775 (Jackson (ed.), *Journal*, II, pp. 376–7; W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater (eds.), *The Works of John Wesley: vol. 19: Journals and Diaries II (1738–43)* (Nashville, Tennessee, 1990), p. 51 n. 41).

⁶ A Quaker until she was baptised on 17 Apr. 1739 and admitted to the female Methodist bands in Bristol on the following day (Frank Baker (ed.), *The Works of John Wesley: vol. 25: Letters I (1721–39)* (Oxford, 1980), p. 636; see also Ward and Heitzenrater (eds.), *Journals and Diaries II*, p. 175)).

⁷ No other references have been discovered to this writer.

him above twice and that was when he was Going to Georgia. The first of my hearing your Brother was in the Bowling Green upon the pharisee and publican.⁸ From the Expounding upon the different States I perceived my Case was dangerous and began to be very thoughtfull and Restless that I did never think my self safe before but feard I should be Lost. I had still somewhat within me told me I was not right. I strove to help my self by my works that afforded me no peace. I knew if I died as I was I should be damned but had a hope God would forgive me when I came to die yet perfectly ignorant of any inward feeling in my soul not so much as the drawings of the Father to distinguish itt.

Some time after I heard your brother being one morning att private prayer. I felt my self so drawn to Christ. I thought I was thrusting my head into his wounds in his side. After that I often felt those Drawings and began to think itt was not so hard to Gett to heaven as some did imagine. I often said Mr Wesley teaches us an Easy way to Gett there. He says tis but to believe and heavens yours. Glory be to God for his Grace. But att that time I was not Convinced of one spark of unbelief. Soon after this the Lord showed me I was an unbeliever yet I thought before nothing Could be Easier than to believe. Itt causes me now to shut my mouth against any one that is not convinced of itt knowing itt is by the mighty power of God. Then I found the spirit of God begin to move and work in my soul. I was very restless and deeply convinced I was in a Lost state yet constantly directed to apply to the Blood of Christ. I knew not what Course to take but was filled with Horror and Dread. Finding there was but a poor Breath that separated me from Hell, I went to you and told you my case. You bid me Look to Christ. I said I could not because I had Crucified him afresh. You asked me how long I had been convinced of that. I told you under your brothers ministry. I asked you if there was any hope for me. You told me you could give me none.

Then I thought my case was worse than before and was Exceedingly troubled. You bid me look to Christ. There was my hope. I continued in Great distress for several weeks. Att last I went to Sister Rawlins⁹ and told her my condition. She said I had frequent offers of Grace but could not believe itt was for me. She said I would not let God work with me but keep him out of my soul through my unbelief. One of the Society came to me with Great joy telling what the Lord had done for her. I was struck with amazement and concluded that God was a Respecter of persons and did think I was reprobated and was for three days in a miserable condition and I often wished I had never been born. I could be Glad to quitt myself of the world but I so dreaded the torments of Hell.

The Sunday following I went to meeting. Mr Diaper¹⁰ was to deliver the sacrament. He took his text out of the Revelations And I beheld and

⁸ Luke 18: 9-14.

⁹ On 19 May 1740 John Wesley refers to Sister Rawlins' band in his diary (see also 22 Mar. 1741).

¹⁰ For Diaper see n. 7 of the text of the Evans List of 1715.

lo in the throne and of the four Beasts and in the midst of the Elders stood a Lamb as itt had been Slain.¹¹ His discourse upon that Subject was very affecting yet itt did not touch me. I was troubled at the Hardness of my heart and thought there was no help for me. I continued in that Dead stupid Condition till sermon was Ended. I began to think I am dead and Cold and have neither Life nor power. If the Lord pleases he can remove this in a moment and if itt Be the will of God I shall be thus. His will be done. Then I said Lord thou art not confined nor Limitted to the narrow Comprehension of my understanding. Thou workest when and where and how thou pleasest. I beg thou wilt give me a Resignation to thy will and Deal with me as Seemeth thee Good.

I felt a Great Calmness in my Spirit. Then Mr Diaper said now Look up and behold your Saviour. See him pouring out his Blood for your sakes. My heart was touched. In a manner the Lord Revealed himself to me in his Crucifixion. Evidently by faith I saw him with his Blood running from his wounds in Branches Down his arm his body in Great paleness and his mouth as Gasping his Last Breath I felt I received a quickning power and the Benefit of his Blood aplyed to my Soul that moment after Sacrament was Ended. Mr Diaper gave out the hymn and att mentioning the Cross particular I felt as itt were a change as I thought inward and outward. My heart fluttered as though itt would have tore out of my body. I seemed as though I had been Convulsed. My mouth was filled with prayer and prais as fast as I could utter. From thence I believed I was justified, that I had a Continual witness. I should have a Clearer Evidence but rested very much upon what I had received and was very much Lifted up. But itt pleased the Lord to suffer me to fall into Great Doubts and I felt my heart turn to the same centre. Then I Dreaded I was falling asleep again. I was so Dead to Every Spiritual work.

Soon after itt pleased God to send Mr John Wesly amongst us again from London which was the ninth week after I Received as I do since believe the Earnest of my justification. The Friday I went to intercession the Lord Gave me Great power of importunity but soon fell again into Great heaviness. I went att Evening to Expounding and soon after Mr John Wesly began I felt my heart Clipt as though an hand Graspt itt. The Greater he was in power the stronger I felt my pain. Att last itt Extorted strong Groans from me. I was not able to sitt but Laid my self on the floor. The Excessive pain and workings of my heart made me think itt was Death pangs yet at that time I found no terror of Death but seemed to be so far resined that I could say itt is the Lord Lett him do what seemeth him Good. But as soon as Mr. Wesly had done I found I was somewhat released but itt Left a Great soreness in my heart.

The Sunday morning following Mr Wesly was showing the marks of justification. I found I came short of itt and Could not say by the witness of Gods spirit my sins was forgiven but I Remembered I had

¹¹ Revelation 5: 6.

heard Mr Cynick¹² say a person might be forgiven when they felt the atoneing Blood though they Could not boldly say itt. I thought Either your Brother or he was wrong. This I concluded was I to trust my Salvation upon mans opinion. I would sooner be Led by the minister than him. One thing I observed. I never found my heart to him as itt was to you and your Brother and I found in the End itt was the Great mercy of God itt was not otherwise I might been Led into those Errors as he is invincibly opinionated. But by the power of God the word sank Deep into me that morning and Drove me almost to dispair. I could have Dispatcht my self but by the preventing Grace of God I wright to your Brother and told him the distress I was in and sorely wounded. I found there was no help for me but immediately to fly to Christ. I Earnestly besought the Lord to Give me some token for Good. In Great anguish of spirit I cryed to the Almighty. He answered from his Holy Habitation therefore I can say God Deals familiarly with man.

While I was in prayer I Laid the Bible before me and the Lord directed me those words in Zachariah. Turn to thy strong hold the prisoners of hope. Even today do I declare that I will Render Double unto thee¹³ al Glory be to God. Even as he promised so was itt done unto me that notwithstanding I Received Doubtful and thought itt was to Great for me to Receive but not to Great for God to Give. I resolved in the morning to Carry the Copy of what I had wright to your Brother that you might see itt. You was att that time recovering of the fever. Your brother sett out for London so that I had not the opertunity of seeing him. But my purpose of Going to you was immediately stopt by those words strongly aplyed to me. Put not thy trust in an Arm of flesh. Trust thou in the Living God.¹⁴ I answered Lord I will. From that moment the intent of Going to you was taken away.

In the morning I met the Band. Being then upon tryal I found a more than usual desire to pray. As soon as I began I was led to plead the Benefit of Christs death and Suffering. I felt the power of God in such a manner as I Cannot Express. I was filled with joy and Love wonder and amazement that the Lord should reveal himself in such a distinct manner as I thought than few had seen or felt the Like. As St John describes him so did I Clearly behold him with the Eye of faith with his garment as white as snow and a Glittering belt about his paps that my Soul was filled with devout raptures.¹⁵ Sir itt was no formed imagination. I know the father did with Love reveal his son to me that he communicated the influence of his Love to me by the power of faith. But for the time I was in a strong sense of my justification and very

¹² John Cennick (1718–55): a hymn writer and one of John Wesley's first lay preachers. He disagreed with Wesley over religious doctrine, became a Calvinist supporter of George Whitefield, and in 1745 joined the Moravians (see the following text).

¹³ Zechariah 9: 12.

¹⁴ The nearest equivalents to this passage in the Bible are 2 Chronicles 32: 8 and Jeremiah 17: 5.

¹⁵ Revelation 1: 13–14, perhaps combined with Daniel 7: 9.

Clear which was about fourteen days and the Continual sight of him as Described before the Lord to Give me a full assurance of pardon applyed those words to me. I have blotted out thy transgressions. I have Redeemed thy soul. This is the way. Walk thou in it¹⁶ and continually strong promises while I was in this Comfort which I never Could receive before.

But after I went home from the Band the morning I Received forgiveness I sat down to think what the Lord was about to do with me. I never had felt the Like before. I felt somewhat pouring over my heart. I cannot describe what itt was Like particular but itt was as an odour that perfumes. I felt that Every sinew and joyst was Effected. Itt ran through the very marrow of my Bones and sink me as itt were into nothing that I was ready to Cry out several times in a Day Lord I cannot Contain itt. Att Last I felt the overflowing of the Love of God so in my heart that nature began to sink and I said to Sister Nichols I believe I shall be forced to take to my bed. She said the Lord will inlarge your Capacity. He knows you are but an Earthen vessel. I often felt such Shootings within that my soul would seem to be all of a quiver ready for the wing to soar to Christ.

I write to your brother to London to Lett him know the Lord had answerd his Last petition for me and Given me the Benefitt of his Blessing. When he left us the Wednesday following about noon I was in private prayer. I was immediately Caught as itt were out of the body. Jesus held out his Left hand with a Crown Exceeding bright. I cannot tell you what I felt in my soul att that time but I beheld itt with Great amazement and about the space of two or three minutes after he held out his right hand with the Length of half a sheet of paper white and Clear. I looked Earnestly but Could not perceive any wrighting. As to the mentioning this itt consisteth not but upon your desireing me to be particular.

I find by daily Experience neither sights nor Gifts availeth to make the Christian Complete till Christ be formed in me. I do not remember the Loseing the sense of my justification any otherwise than by this. While one was reading Mr Seward¹⁷ journal I sat by and found immediately I was disafected to the author. Then I felt instantly I had Lost that sweet peace which before I injoyed but att that time I did not fall into any Doubt which was Sunday Evening till Wednesday following. Then the Devil came upon me Like a roaring Lyon telling me twas all Delusion what I had received and I had deceived my soul. Then I began to reason with him how can this be. Nature Could not work this in me. I surely have had a foretaste of heaven and that thou could not Give me. I found my adversary too strong for me. I saw there was no other help for me but to fly to Christ and Lay hold of him. I strongly importuned him in prayer. The strength of the temptation was Defeated

¹⁶ Isaiah 30: 21.

¹⁷ William Seward (1702–40): converted to Methodism by Charles Wesley, but became a Calvinist supporter of Whitefield.

for a season yet I soon fell into Great Doubts and Continued for several weeks till your Brother's return from London. The morning he took his journey for London again Mr Nowers¹⁸ read in the Desk while he was in prayer. I felt first a Great burning in my heart and immediately my Soul was filled with the Love of God and sweet peace and those words applyed to me again. I have blotted out thy transgressions. I said Lord if itt be thy voice I beseech thee Give me a farther testimony and itt came again thou shalt not die in thy sins.

From thence to the Monday Eight Days I injoyed Great peace and Comfort in my soul. That Evening I went to meet my band but I found there was none Likely to meet but the Leader and my self. I directly went home but had not been many minutes in the house before I fell into discourse with one that Lived in house with me of a matter that concerned me not but to rob me of my peace. I withdrew my self instantly for I perceived the Lord was Departed from me. Then I was ashamed and Confounded. I thought I dared not to ask one petition more of the Lord. I had so often forfeited my pardon and made Breach upon Breach. I had often made strong resolutions when I lost the first sense of pardon. If the Lord would but once more try me again with his Love I would walk so circumspect and have such care over all my thoughts words and actions that I would not Grieve his holy spirit again. But I made those promises in my own strength. I know the Lord would have Enabled me to perform this and more if I had been faithful to the Grace Given me.

After this my causing the Lord to withdraw himself from me by unnecessary talking I fell into Great Darkness and Continued so some time till as near as I can remember. Last ash wednesday was twelve month. Mr Humphreys¹⁹ preached att the Room in the horsefair. He expounded on the seventeenth of Saint Johns Gospel. I believe then he had the power of God and the Spirit with him. I felt the aplication of itt to my Soul when he Expressed these words Jesus is praying you up to the father. I said Lord wilt thou Give me an inheritance in thy Kingdom. Itt was aplyed to me again. Thou shalt have an inheritance in my Kingdom. My soul seemed as though twas taken into another region. Itt lasted but a few moments. I cannot be particular but I think itt was that time only I received power under Mr. Humphreys to receive any promise by faith. I mean under his preaching but as soon as you returned from London I found you Came not alone. I Know of a truth the Lord was with you. I felt the Gospel reach my heart Continualy. Great workings and strong struglings for many months Even to this Day.

¹⁸ Edward Nowers transferred his allegiance from the Moravians to the Methodists, becoming a member of the Methodist Society at the Foundery in London.

¹⁹ Joseph Humphreys (1720–?): a trainee dissenting minister when in 1738 he became a Methodist lay preacher. In Oct. 1740 he visited Bristol but in early 1741 refused Wesley's call to settle in the area. In May 1741 he split with Wesley over doctrine and in Jan. 1743 was one of the founders of Welsh Calvinistic Methodism, preaching widely in the Bristol area. Later he was ordained, first as a Presbyterian and then as an Anglican clergyman and repudiated his evangelical past (see Baker (ed.), *Letters II*, p. 46 n. 16).

Frequently under such a Deep sense of the Love of Jesus to me though such a Deep revolter and Great Backslider that I stand amazed att the Boundless mercy and Long Suffering God the Lord shows me. More that Every Breath I Draw Loudly Calls for praise I am not in Hell. I do very often stand astonished and wonder I had not been there Long ago. The Lord hath brought to my memory very fresh Great Deliverances he wrought for me above twenty years ago. As I thought this was of Chance but the Lord shows me he has watched over me for Good from my youth up until now. Yet I feel in me a spirit of ungratitude. I want to be more thankfull. I find a continual desire of being sett free that my whole Life might be spent in praise. I seldom come under the Gospel delivered by your mouth but in an Especial manner I feel the workings of my heart Longings reaching panting after Jesus that sometimes I have faith. As I think to be healed all over my Soul will be inflamed with Love to Christ. But when I feel my heart Cold and hard I fall into Great heaviness and am ready to think I deceive my self and am presumptuous because I cannot doubt of a Deliverance. This I find the Lord hath so far wrought in me. I am contented.

Often I have Endeavoured to write when may be necessary though I have been tempted not to write. But I know I believe and feel by the Continual witness of God's spirit you are the true minister of the Everlasting Gospel and God forbids me to disobey you. I do desire to praise God with uttmost sincerity for his Great mercy in sending you amongst us. Far be itt from me that I should do anything to Grieve you. This I know is of the Lord. Also my heart have been often Grieved att our ungratitude to you when we have such continual manifestation of your Love and faithfulness witnessed by the Daily Love and pains and trouble you Go through for our sakes. Your Sufferings are Great but your reward shall be Greater. Sir I beg you will hold me in Continual remembrance and bear me upon your heart before the Lord. Pray for me that the Lord may direct me in my prayers, What petitions to ask for you as my faithful pastor and Shepherd that am a prisoner of hope

Elizabeth Downs

3. ELIZABETH HALFPENNY²⁰

Reverend Sir

According to your desire, I have given you a full Account of the State of my Soul at Present, and also of Some of my Former Life; as I thought would be Proper to mention; and as it now occurs to my Mind.

It Pleased you that when Mr. Whitfield first came to Preach in Bristol I went to hear him at Nicholas Church, and Seemed to approve of his

²⁰ No other references have been found to this writer.

Doctrine, and was a Constant hearer of his; and so never missed any opportunity. Mr. Whitfield's Doctrine had Some Effect upon me, So that I was in Part convinced of Sin, and Shed Tears very often; but received no Glympse of the Light of God's Countenance, and went on still in Darkness; and had no thought of a Saviour. Now I clearly see that I was then groveling in the Dark, and knew not whither I went.

When Mr. Whitefield was going to Georgia, I was unwilling to be a hearer of your Brother Mr. John, who was then to come here to Bristol; and went to Mr. Whitefield on that account, and Testified to him my unwillingness to hear Mr. John, whom Mr. Whitfield Recommended as a Faithful Shepherd, in Such a manner, that Induced me to consent to be his hearer. And Accordingly I went to the Bowling Green, where he had not long been Preaching. Before I was Tempted to think he was a Roman Catholick. I found now that I was a hearty Bigot, as it was well known.

When I was under your Brother's Doctrine, those words had great Effect upon me, which I had in my Childhood meditated upon; Ask, and ye Shall receive, Seek, and ye Shall find, knock, and it shall be opened unto you.²¹ My Business calling me among those who they call the Fashionable People of the World, who Endeavoured through their Pretension to have Love and Tenderness for my Soul, to Entice me from hearing the Word, by Telling me such Things as the World doth. But all their Devices had no Effect upon me (Blessed be God). At one time I went to the Bowling Green to hear Mr. John, when I heard him Speak of Entertaining Strangers which I found Affected me much; But rather Esteemed him as a Saviour than a Minister, and So continued in that Dreadful State for about a year, My Soul never being at rest but when I was with him, or hearing him talked of. But this Idolatrous Love Proceeded no farther than Trusting in the Arm of Flesh; But yet I was not willing any one should know it lest I should be told I was in An Error.

I had Promised to go into the country and at the time of my going, your Brother was just come down from London, and I went down to the New Room in order to see him, because I could not go away before I had seen him. I went down but he was not there. But Mr. Richards²² and Mr. Ellison²³ was there at Breakfast, who sang a Hymn whose First Line is, O Thou who when I did complain, at which time I was in some measure Supported under my Heavy Burthen. While I was in the Country, I had the Liberty of coming to the Room at Kingswood where I saw Mr. Nowers, to whom I was Pressed in Spirit to Speak concerning the Idolatrous Love I had for your Brother which he had so often warned us against. But fearing he would Put a wrong Construction on

²¹ Matthew 7: 7.

²² Thomas Richards (1717–98): one of the earlier itinerant lay preachers. See Baker (ed.), *Letters I*, p. 638, n. 4.

²³ John Ellison (c. 1720–91): son of the Wesleys' older sister Susannah and an excise officer at Bristol. See Baker (ed.), *Letters II*, p. 14 n. 5.

what I should Speak to him I refrained for that time. But afterwards I Spoke to him, upon which he told me it was no Strange Thing to him to hear of those things, or in other words to that Effect, and so I found considerable relief at that time.

Some time after, I went to Rose Green where Mr. John Expounded on the Fiery Trial,²⁴ in which trial I was then in, and continued therein Sometime. When Mr. John came Down from London and Expounded in the New Room I then found my Affection grow cold towards him at which I was grieved and Troubled very much. Not knowing at that time that it was a Conviction from the Lord. At the first time at Weaver's Hall, Mr. John was Expounding on the Death of Lazarus,²⁵ when I found Such work in my heart as I never felt before, and Saw the Necessity of a Thorough Change of Life, a Blessing so great that I knew not how to Praise God for. I went home, and for Sometime would Read never a Book but the Bible. I began to feel the Drawings of the Father, which continued a Considerable time. I was very glad to hear People talk of the Love of God, though I myself was not a Partaker of it. But I could always rejoice to hear talk of the Loving kindness of the Lord, and desired that the Lord would Teach me what I knew not.

New Year's Day, you Expounded on the Barren Fig Tree,²⁶ at the New Room, which made a Considerable Impression on my heart, which continued about a Fortnight, and had no rest, because of my desire to have more knowledge of the Scripture. When you Said that we might be put on a Level with Whores and Drunkards and Outward Sinners, I could not receive the Saying; and Staggered thereat very much. Mr. John would often say to me, O that you could become as a Little Child (Blessed be God). I believe his Prayers are heard.

I was at Temple Backs at one time, where the Lord was Pleased to Enlighten my understanding, to see the meaning of Part of the Scripture. I felt, as it were, a Mountain removed from my heart, and Clouds from my understanding. O What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits, and his unspeakable mercies; Sing ye Heavens, and Rejoice O Earth, for the Lord hath done it, let the Floods Clap their hands, and the Trees of the Wood Rejoice before the Lord.

About Two years ago, I went to Rose Green where (under your ministry, Blessed be God) I Received Forgiveness of Sins, Since which I found that I thirsted for Christ more and more, and more of his Love; I find that whatever Temptation would beset me, would work together for my Good, if I would Cast all my care on the Lord, and not Trust in my own Strength. At a certain time in my Band, I received an Extraordinary measure of the Love of God, which made me think that I Loved the Lord alone. I had no love for the World nor the Things thereof; I counted all Things but Dung and Dross for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord. Ever Since, the Word of God Sinks

²⁴ I Peter 4: 12. Cf. Daniel 3: 19–30.

²⁵ John 11.

²⁶ Luke 13: 6–9. Cf. Matthew 21: 18–22.

in my heart, with greater Power and Demonstration, and I Enjoy a Closer Union with God.

The time that your Brother read the Letter in the Bands, which Mr. Ceneck writ, it was of great use to me; This underhand dealing of Mr. Cenecks could never be right, which made me have no Conversation with him, and at that time the Lord Strengthened me to be upon my watch against Mr. Whitefields coming here, and so I never heard him, neither have I had a Desire to Speak to him ever Since. But the Lord hath gathered me as a hen gathereth her Chicken under her Wings, and I doubt not but he will, if I Prove Faithfull to the Grace I have received.

Sometime ago I could not believe that there was any Such State as Perfection before Death; but under your Doctrine, on a Saturday, I was convinced to the contrary. Being at Kingswood on Sacrament Day, in an Instant, was brought to my View, by the Eye of Faith, the Form of a Tall Parson in his Surplice, his hair was White, and Seemed to move on the ground with his back towards me, but he was soon Vanished. The First time of my coming to hear the word, after being confined from it a considerable time, the Word came with Such Power and Demonstration that I was So filled with the Love of God it caused me to overflow with Tears, Several times, which left a Soreness at my heart, which I never felt before. O that I may be always upon my Watch, looking unto the Lord, that I may have no head knowledge, or wisdom of my own, but that Wisdom which flows from God.

O May I ever give the Glory to God for the Blessing that he bestowed upon me, in Drawing me to hear your Doctrine, and enabling me to continue in the way that he hath appointed. Now, there is nothing troubling me, but a continual Fear of you and your Brother's Death, but it comes to mind often that the Lord will Strengthen me, if he Should be Pleased to call you hence. I Now can rejoice in Tribulation and Persecutions, and as I have been a Partaker of the Benefit of your Prayers, Lord grant that I may always be teachable with respect to your Advice and Direction to me, being Sensible it will be for my Good, your unworthy Servant & Daughter in the Lord

Elizabeth Halfpenny

I have omitted one thing which I have undermentioned

At the time you Expounded at Rose Green, I thought it was a very unsuitable Chapter which you was upon, which was the Sixteenth of Ezekiel, and was much offended at it, but before you had done the Lord was Pleased to Set to his Seal, and I Received Forgiveness of Sins. The Words came with so great Power that I Seemed to be lifted off the Ground; and never Since have I fallen in Doubts of my Justification, and now if I find any Darts or Temptations Assaulting me, they are not Burthensome to me.

4. ELIZABETH SAYCE²⁷

Reverend Sir

According to your desire, I have Endeavoured to give you as full account of the State of my Soul at Present, and also of some Part of my former Life, as I thought would be Proper, as it does at Present occur to my Mind.

It Pleased God, that about Five years ago, I went to hear Mr. Whitfield Preach at St. Nicholas Church, and thought that Strange Things were brought to my Ears. The Word came very Sweet, but my understanding was not opened. But I approved of his Doctrine, which seemed as a Lovely Song of One that hath a Pleasant Voice, and heard him Constantly. And when I heard him Recommend Mr. Wesley to the People, as one to be Preferred before him, I thought that Impossible.

When Mr. Wesley came, I went to hear him in Nicholas Street Society, but at that time the Word had little Effect on me. But at his Preaching at Clifton Church the word came very Sweet, and with Power; and I Shed Tears, but knew not well for what reason. I went Constantly to the Societies, and at one Time, when the People were taken with Violent Fits of Conviction, some of whom being in a few minutes Set at Liberty, and Sang Praise to the Lord, and I also Sympathised with them, and thought that I also must have been Partaker of their Condition before I could be a Christian, and wished to undergo the Same Convictions. When I came home, I did not refrain from Acquainting my Neighbours what Strange Work the Lord was Reviving in the Midst of the Ears.

Sometime after, Mr. John Wesley went for London and Mr. Ceneck came hear, who I heard Expound at Bedminster, on the Revelations, but it was a Mystery to me. When you Expounded on Isaiah, It all Seemed very Sweet, but when you or another Said that we deserved to be Damned, I thought I might be Excepted, thinking I was not So bad as a Whore or a Drunkard. But soon after, I Saw that my Inward Parts were very Wickedness, and could put myself on a Level with the Chief of Sinners, and I was very angry with my Husband when he Put himself in the Bands. I had great Convictions, In so much that when I went to Bed, I feared I Should be in Hell before the Morning. I was afraid to go to Prayer for fear of the Devil, who I thought was in Every Corner of the House; and in this Condition I came to hear the word expecting to quiet any Conscience which was as the Troubled Sea that cannot rest. In this State I continued for Several Weeks. When my Husband talked of Faith, and Forgiveness of Sins, I thought we might receive Forgiveness of Sins but not in Such a manner as to know and feel it applied.

Thus I went on in Darkness and Deadness until it Pleased God who Quickeneth the dead, in great mercy Passed by me when I was in my

²⁷ She may have been the wife of Thomas Sayse, hooper, a member of the United Society at Bristol, whom John Wesley visited quite frequently according to his diaries for 1739–41. In 1775 Elizabeth Sayes widow lived at 15 Hanover Street (*Sketchley's Bristol Directory*).

Blood and Said unto me Live; which was at your Repeating the 11th Verse of the XXXIII Chapter of Ezekiel, "Say unto them, As I Live, Saith the Lord God, I have no Pleasure in the Death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his Way and Live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die, O House of Israel?" I gladly received the Exhortation, and could with great Joy testify that I had Redemption in his Blood, the forgiveness of my Sins.

When I came home, I could not be Persuaded by my Husband, not to think that Christ lived in me, being So overflowed with the Sense of Pardon Love. But soon after, I gave Place to the Reasoning Devil who asked, "How can these things be;" and so I was in Doubt about the certainty of it, which Increased the more, when I felt Stirrings of Anger; and what to do I knew not. One Night, My Husband and I were coming to the Room where I expected to hear you, but one told us that Mr. Ceneck was to be there, at which I was so displeased that I would have returned and attempted to go back Three or four times, had not my Husband used his utmost Persuasions that I might not. But as Soon as I came to the Room, I was for going out. But I found at Mr. Ceneck's giving out a Hymn that I was taking the Enemys Part against my own Soul, for when the Hymn was Sung, Those Four Lines of Another Hymn came to my Mind, which are underwritten and the Lord Spake those words to my Soul, and Applied them to my Heart, so that to the great Comfort of my Soul I could once more Declare, that the God of Tender mercy had healed my Backsliding and write Pardon on my heart as with a Pen of Iron; for I could wish to die that Instant, because I was not at all afraid to meet the King of Terrors.

I know thou wilt accept me now,
I know my Sins are now forgiven!
My Head to Death O let me bow,
Nor keep my Life, to Lose my Heaven.

Thus I went on my way rejoicing. Soon after, I entered my Self in the Bands, and when I came in the Bands the first time, I had reasoning with my Self in This manner; As I Have now Enterd into the Bands, I must certainly Cut off the Right hand and Pluck out the Right Eye, and Forsake all that I may be Christs Disciple, for no Man Putting his hand to the Plow and looking back is fit for the Kingdom of Heaven. I did not long continue in the Light of God's Countenance, but fell into Doubts and Fears. The Poor and Needy sought water but there was none, and her Tongue failed for Thirst. I was so feeble that I could Scarce Speak. My Sorrows compassed me about on every Side. I thought I Should never any more have the Oil of Joy for the Spirit of Heaviness. I had no rest in my Bones by Reason of the absence of my God; my very Body was ready for the Grave, the Spirit had well nigh failed before him, and the Soul which he had made.

Sometime after, I went to hear your Brother Mr. John, Preach at Temple Backs, where the Power of God was in an Extraordinary manner; But I was So much cast down that I was Obliged to have the help of one of Our Sisters to Place me in a Convenient Place for

hearing, where I Sometime waited, Expecting to find Relief, being Sensible how God did visit others then Present with his Loving kindness. And the word Seeming to me as a Tynkling Cymbal I was as a Dead Man out of Mind. But before it was over, I heard Mr. John Speaking Thus, Is there one Soul among you that Seems to be forsaken, from whom God hath hid his face, Is there ne'er a one that would gladly Accept of a Saviour, in Speaking which words or some other to that Effect, he fastened his Eyes on me and applied himself to me as though he had known my Desperate Case; and offered Salvation to us So fervently till at last I received it in Such a manner as I never Expected. I felt in my Inmost Soul that I was forgiven; I was as if I was Flying on the Wings of Love up to my Saviours Breast. The Angel of the Lord came upon me and Marvellous Light Shone into my Prison; and my Chains fell off. I found that my Saviour was a Physician that heald both Soul and Body: In Short, I cannot Express the Happiness I then Enjoyed. I always found great comfort when I received Bread and Wine in Remembrance of Our Lord's Body and Blood, which I actually fed on by Faith, as my Body is fed by meat and Drink, and always Left a lasting Impression on my heart.

One time in Particular at receiving the Sacrament I felt the Power of God in Such a manner that I was as one that had but little Strength left and Seemed to the Minister as though I was in Heaviness, who told me, that it was a Place for rejoicing and not for Mourning. At one time I heard you Encouraging us against Martyrdom, at which I Seemed to Stagger, fearing when I Should be called to Suffer for Christ, I Should Recant. But Sometime after when Parting with a Friend, I thought I was a Stranger and Pilgrim on the Earth, and could readily (had I been called that time to Suffer) Jumped in and clapped my Hands in the Flames, for I counted all things but Dung and Dross so I might win Christ. But I Soon was lifted up, and Trusted in the Gifts and Graces and I was Rich and Increased with Goods and had need of Nothing.

But all this while, I was not Sensible that I was lifted up, until you met our Private Band, when you asked me if I was not troubled with Self and Pride, which Struck me as Dead, for I knew not what to Answer. And when I came under the word, I found it to be Quick and Powerfull and Sharper than any Two Edged Sword, Piercing, even to the Dividing Asunder of Joints and Marrow and a Discerner of the Thoughts and Intents of the heart, for I was So Sensibly cut by it as my Body might be by a Sword, and would often wish to withdraw my Self from Such Searching.

Thus I went on Mourning for the Loss of my Saviour as one that Mourneth for his only Son. I was as Noahs Dove, and could find no rest till I was again taken into the Ark. The Name of a Saviour was as Ointment Bound forth, I hungered and Thirsted for my Lord, and every Place Seemed Melancholy by Reason of his absence. I could not lift up my heart to God, for he Seemd as Though he was not Pacified with me. I had no Power to Pray to God, but to the Son. It was he to whom I Sued for Pardon, that he might reconcile me again to his Offended Father,

which he did One Night I was at Prayer. For before I had Ended my Prayer to Christ, that he might reconcile me to his Father I could not only cry my Lord, but my Lord and my God. And in the Night time I had Such a view of the Presence of God that humbled me to the Dust. I became in his Sight as a Dead Dog. I saw that I was in his Sight less than Nothing and Vanity; and as a beast of the Field.

During my Seeing the Vision, The Words that came to my Mind were those, I will make all my Goodness Pass before thee. Behold there is a Place by me, and Thou Shalt Stand upon a Rock; And it shall come to pass, while my Glory passeth by, that I will Put thee in a Clift of the Rock, and will cover thee with My Hand when I Pass by; And I will take away mine Hand, and thou Shalt See my Back Parts: but my Face Shall not be Seen.²⁸ So Gracious a Sight it was, that I know not how to forget it, Rejoice O Heavens, and ye that Dwell therein, Shout with Joy ye Worms of the Earth, for the Lord Omnipotent's Condescension in Thus Humbling himself to behold a Sinful Worm, even Dust and Ashes, and favouring me with Such Amazing Love and Condescension.

After this, the Lord was Pleasd to uncover my heart more and more, and so all Evil Tempers did beset me Sore, but the Lord gave me Strength as my Day was. I have gone through Close Trials, which always worked together for my good, for I found that Temptation always Stirred me up to lay hold on the Lord, for Suffering Faith did always brighter glow and Purify the heart. I go to Prayer, Generally, with Reluctancy. But when I am at Prayer, I find the Lord Reproves and Convinces me of my folly, for as much as he then gives me an Extraordinary Blessing and could then wish to be always at Prayer.

Since Mr. John's coming here this last time, I find that I am Quickened and Strengthened Considerably; and more Especially when the Hymns on Universal Redemption are Sung. At a certain time when the Leaders met, everyone was asked, concerning the Witness of the Spirit. When I was asked when I had received it, I mentioned the time, at which we were all Affected, so much that we were all as One Mighty Blaze of the Fire of Love, God being in the midst of us as in the Holy Place of Sinai. The more I Press forward the more I feel of the Evil and Corruption of my heart, and though I feel my Sins rise as Mountains yet the Lord gives Power against them. He deals Tenderly with me, and no Temptation happens, without his making a way for me to Escape, that I may be able to bear it. I doubt not, but the Lord who hath bestowed upon me his grace and Blessings in Such a manner as he has done will (If I am Faithful to his grace) bring me into the Rest of the People of God. I have no more to add, but that I Shall acknowledge you as my Father in Christ, and that it is my Bounden Duty to Pray to God to give you the Choicest of his Blessings in Time and Eternity, your unworthy Servant and Daughter in the Lord

Elizabeth Sais

²⁸ Exodus 33: 19, 21-3.

5. NAOMI THOMAS²⁹

Reverend Sir

I have given you a full Account of the State of my Soul at Present, and also of Some of my Former Life as I thought would be necessary, as it now comes into my mind.

When Mr. Whitefield came here to Bristol to Preach in the Churches, I went to hear him and also wherever he Preached or Expounded; and heard him with great delight; but though I did believe his report, yet the Arm of the Lord was but in Little or no degree revealed to me before the Lord was Pleasd to Send your Brother Mr. John, to Preach his Word, in Such a clear way and manner as he did; which made me often think it was Another Gospel, in comparison of what I heard before. And it Pleasd the Lord to cause it to have great effect upon me; for many times by his Preaching, I have been, as it were Sawn Asunder, and at my Witts' end; not knowing what to do; and then, I found that what I had done was as nothing, and had not as much as begun to be a Christian. But Still I was out of Christ and in a Sinful State, and under the Covenant of Works; and chained down under the Wrath of God; and thought I must have for ever Perished. So I went on bemoaning my Lost State by Original Sin.

A Small time after, I went to hear your Brother Mr. John at Baptist Mills, where the Lord was Pleasd to Shew me Plainly and more fully than before, that I was under the Yoke of Bondage, and that I was a Slave to Sin and the Devil. I then knew not what to do, but could Scarce keep myself from crying out, in the Bitterness of my Soul; What Shall I do to be Saved. I came to my House but none but the Lord knew what I felt at that time; neither can I express it. I went on for a long time in Doubt and Fears, and without any hope, neither could I tell my Condition to any Person, but Still I was ashamed of my own Vileness which made my Burthen the heavier.

I went to hear your Brother at Clifton Church, where the Word came with Such Power into my Soul that I was taken in Such a manner that I never was in before; and was afraid I Should Expose myself before all the People; but could not mind one word of all he Spoke; for my Bones Seemed to me as if they were out of joint, but I made Shift to come home with much ado. Monday morning following I went to Newgate to hear your Brother, where I was taken in the same manner as before and Still I was afraid men should see me; so I came home. One of my Friends would have me go with her to the Brickyard the Same Day, but I told her I was afraid to venter again; knowing how it was with me Twice before; but in the Evening I went to the Society in Baldwin Street, and there I found that the Lord had not Forsaken me, but made his Power to be known by Such a Rebellious Wretch as I (who had resisted the motions of his Spirit) in taking away my Senses and Strength for a

²⁹ No other certain references have been found to this writer, although John Wesley refers in his diaries to a Mr and Mrs Thomas in 1739 (but see n. 35).

Small time, and afterwards giving me Ease for a little Space from the Burthen I was under, and Enabling me to come home as if nothing had been the matter with me; and giving me Such Joy and comfort all that Night that I cannot Express.

So I went on (expecting a greater deliverance than what I had already received) in great Joy and Peace. Afterwards I heard yourself, Sometimes being wounded by it, and afterwards heald again, The Lord Setting his Seal to your ministry, So as to cause it to come to my Soul with the Demonstration of the Spirit and of Power. One time in the Bowling green, you Preached on those Words, I in them, and they in me,³⁰ which came with Such Power to my Soul, that then I had Redemption in the Blood of Christ, The Forgiveness of my Sins, and filld with Such Joy that I cannot Express.

A little time after, I went to hear you at the Brickyard, where the Lord was Pleasd to give me a Clearer Sense of his Pardoning Love than before, for then I could Speak to you, and not before. And at Mrs. England's Society³¹ I desired you to return Thanks for the great mercies I had received by your Ministry that Evening. Neither can I declare the comfort I have received through your Ministry, time after time, neither can I be but astonished at the Goodness and Love of God to Such a Sinner.

Thus I went on in Peace and Joy untill I found myself much Ruffled in Mind, and begun to Question the Truth of all I had experienced before. But blessed be God who Soon gave me Relief from those Words, written in a Book which I then opend. Think not thyself wholly left, although for a time I have Sent thee Some Tribulation, or withdrawn thy desired comfort; For this is the way to the Kingdom of Heaven;³² From and through which Words I was comforted and Supported considerably under the Troubles my Soul was in at that time, and the Lord Enabled me to call upon him though in a broken way, and at that time I could Say that the Lord had begun that good work in my Soul, and that he would enable me by his grace to hold out to the end, and endure with Patience what he Should be Pleasd to lay upon me while on Earth, and would keep me from all Sin.

I went to hear you at the Malt Room on Mathew XXIV, and could then Say it is good for me to be here, at which time you described what Wars and Rumours of Wars were in the Souls of Men, and told us that if we did not Experience it in Our Own Souls, we never knew what it was to be born again, which I hoped I did, for I had found Such conflicts and Fightings in my Soul many times.

³⁰ John 17: 23.

³¹ Rachel England was in one of the first bands on 16 Apr. 1739 (Baker (ed.), *Letters I*, p. 631). A love feast at her house is recorded in John Wesley's diary for 23 Apr. and on 4 May Mrs England received remission of sins at the Gloucester Lane Society meeting (John Telford (ed.), *The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley A.M.*, 8 vols. (1931), I, p. 307). The Lawford's Gate Society later met at her house (Ward and Heitzenrater (eds.), *Journal and Diaries II*, pp. 383–4). In 1775 Rachel England lived at 15 Day Street, Cathay (*Sketchley's Bristol Directory*).

³² The nearest equivalent passage in the Bible is Acts 14: 22.

At a certain time I heard you expound on the True Wife and Five Foolish Virgins;³³ By the Lamps are meant, you Said, an Outward Profession of Faith and Holiness. By Oil in Our Lamps was to be Understood, True Repentance and Faith in Christ; and then you told us, we could not be Christians unless we had our hearts Furnished with the Graces of the Holy Spirit of God, as a Prevailing and abiding Principle in Our Souls. In the Evening I heard you expound from the Same Chapter, when you Shewed the necessity of good works and Said we could not be Christians without them, neither could we be Saved by Works without Faith in Christ. Then I Seemd to be dead and dull, until the next Morning, when (Blessed be God) I was again in Love and Peace, and desired to be more Heavenly minded, that I might See more of my own Vileness and the Corruptions of my own wicked heart, and that the Lord would enable me by his Grace to hold out to the end.

Friday following, in the Evening, I heard you Expound on the Sufferings of Christ, and what he underwent for Poor Sinners with which I was much affected, So that my desires reached out after him that is altogether Lovely. So I continued next day, in Love and Joy, and also till Sunday following, when I went to the Lord's Table, in comfort and belief that in and through Christ I Should be accepted. But soon after I was in Doubts again, and did not know what to do. But the Lord was Pleased to confirm those Words to me which I before received, and believd, touching the Sufferings which Christ has gone through in Our Stead; and So was again restored to my Former Peace and Joy; And Still desired the Lord in his own way and time to deliver me from all Sin; For I know and Sometimes do believe that the Lord will cleanse me from all Filthiness of Flesh and Spirit and enable me by his grace to Perfect Holiness in his fear, notwithstanding all my Fears and Distresses I am in, many times occasioned by my own Deceitfull heart, though often like a Watered Garden. Yet I do hope that I Shall Renew my Strength, and wrestle untill I obtain the Blessing and lay hold on the Promises of the Gospel, and until they are fullfilled in me. O that I may enabled by the Grace of God, to say with Holy David Thy Words have I taken as mine heritage for ever, for they are the joy of my heart.³⁴ With many Such Texts of Scripture the Lord has been Pleased to comfort me; But I must own with Shame that I have fallen by my negligence, and Unfaithfullness to the many Graces and Mercies that I have received from time to time; and am Sometimes ready to cry out O that it were with me as in Months past.

I went on in this uncomfortable manner, dead, Dull, and weary of my Self, and did not care whether I came to hear the Word or no; but the last time you came from Wales, in the Morning, I heard you expound; when the Lord manifested himself to me again. But I Sometyme after grew Slack, and gave way to my corrupt and Deceitfull heart; and did

³³. Proverbs 31: 10–31 is a description of ‘the good wife’. Matthew 25: 1–13 contains the parable of ten virgins, five wise and five foolish.

³⁴ Psalms 119: 111.

not attend the Ordinance of hearing the Word as I used to do, which made me grow dead and Slack, and almost without desire to hear the Word at all; and made me Sometimes afraid to call upon the Lord in Prayer; But the Lord was Pleased to Shew me my Vileness, and the Corruption and Deceit of my heart.

The last time you met the Bands I Seemed unwilling to meet; But Blessed be the God of mercies and Long Suffering, who in tender compassion to Such a Backslider as I melted me down with his Love, in Such a manner that I could find no words whereby I might worthily Praise him, who Loveth Such a Sinner as I, as though I had never Sinned against him; and who have been so often called upon to return to the God of my Salvation. Dear Sir, Pray for me, that the Lord would never leave me nor Forsake me, but that he would enable me to hold out to the end, and not begin in the Spirit and end in the Flesh, but be a follower of them who through Faith and Patience Inherit the promises, which is my earnest desire, and that I may go on, from Strength to Strength, although I am now in the Dark, but yet I know the Lord has not wholly Forsaken me, although (through my own Deadness and coldness) the Lord hath left me to walk in Darkness at this time. But yet I do hope that the Lord will deliver me out of this Present State which I am in at this time, and Oh that I may look on him whom I have Pierced afresh, and mourn for my Sins; and the Lord Grant that I may never rest until I am in Christ a new Creature.

Yesterday Evening I heard you in great Joy, though in much grief to think that I had So backslidden from what I was, but yet the Lord did then appear to my great comfort, and through the Exhortation I was enabled by the Grace of God to hope against hope that the Lord will deliver me from all Appearance of Evil, which is and I hope Shall be by Divine Assistance the Earnest desires of my Soul who desires your Prayers for me, your willing though unworthy Servant

Naomi Thomas

6. MARY THOMAS³⁵

Reverend Sir acording to your desier I have given a Short acount of my State. When Mr Whightfield came first to town I went to hear him. I very much aproved of his docktrin when I heard him preach the Last

³⁵ On 6 June 1745 Sarah Colston wrote to John Wesley: 'On Saturday night Molly Thomas was taken home. She was always constant in the use of all the means and behaved well both at home and abroad.' Her dying words are then recorded (reprinted in *Arminian Magazine* (1782) pp. 21–2 and in Nehemiah Curnock (ed.), *The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley A.M.*, 8 vols. (1938), III, pp. 197–8). She may be the Mrs Thomas referred to in n. 29; a sister M. Thomas is recorded as writing to John Wesley on 21 Aug. 1740 (Baker (ed.), *Letters II*, p. 625).

Sermon at Rosegreen and telling that there was one Coming after him whose shoues latchett he was not worthy to unloose.³⁶ I found that was he that Stood by him. I found great Love in my heart to him after that.

The first oportunytee I had I went to hear Mr John Wesley and my conscience soon told me that it was the true Gospell of Christ that he preacht. I likewise began to think how I had Spent my Life haveing Lived almost fivety years in this world. I found that I was ignorant of God. I always thought myself as good as my neighbours and a great deal better than some of them that did curs and swear and gott drunk. I always had a good name amongst my aquaintance which was pleasing to flesh and Blood. But the Lord soon shewed me that I was a divel and had only decevd my Self and all that knew me.

When I went to Church I seldom found any thing there that disturbed me except it was being there too Long. But when I came to hear Mr John Wesley I found nothing but discontent in my mind. He told me things that I had said and don when I was a child and from my youth up even untill now and conscience always said thou art the woman so that I had no peace in my mind. When anyone did cry out in the room I always wished to be the next in hopes to receve forgiveness of Sins but God did not see fitt to Grant me my request.

When you came first to Bristoll I seemed to like you better than your Brother. I thought your way of delivery was finer than his. I thought I should be easier in my mind in hearing of you than I was in hearing of him but alass I found it wors and worse and worse every day. Last St James fair was twelve month you ordered the Sociatee to come and Speak with you which I found a great grief to me for I was ashamed to think I was no better. But I came as I was and you asked me if I was Justified and I said no. You told me I was in a State of damnation which words pierced my heart tho it were what I had heard many times. Yett it never piersed my heart so much as it did then. I then was ready to cry out my punishment is more than I can bear. I saw my Self banisht from the presence of God. I then began to think the day of Grace was past. I began to think how I was brought up when I was a child to know the Lord and what a love I had for Christ when I was a child. But after I was grown up I did reject the Spirit of the Lord in doing that I knew I ought not to do and the Lord hath said my Spirit shall not always strive with man. I could find no comefort for me. I knew not where to go. I began to wish I never had heard them. I was quite out of hopes and wisht I knew the worst and ernestly desierd the Lord that he would by what was preacht that night Shew if I should be Savd or not for I Longed to know the worst.

When I came to the Room you was there. The chapter you was on was concerning the woman taken in adultery and the Lord Said unto her neither do I condemn thee go and Sinne no more.³⁷ The word seemd as spoken to me. I knew not where I was. For a short time I felt Such a heft

³⁶ John 1: 27.

³⁷ John 8: 11.

go of my heart that I cannot express it. I was assured that Christ died for me. I feared nothing where I went. I had Christ with me.

I was in this Joy for about a fortnight when being att the room one night before you came there was two young women sate behind me and telling how they was and how they had cryd out Such a time and what an agony they had been in before they had recievied forgiveness. And they said that those that did not feel those agonies that they decieved themselves. Hear the devil gott me again in his Snare in putting me to think I was not Justified because I had not been takn in such a mannor. Here I soon Lost my Joy and began to drive on heavily. Some times I was ready to give it all up then the Lord Shed abroad his Love in my heart and I could a lost my life for the truth of it. But as soon as that Joy abated I was in fear and so continued till the Tewsday before Mr John Wesley fell sick. When he was telling of the five wounds Christ had recievied for us then I found his Blood aplied to my heart Saying Daughter be of good chear thy Sins are forgiven thee. Then I found Great Joy and Sweetness in my Soul. I then went upon tryal into the bands and there I found Great Love to my band.

When Mr John Wesley came Last to Bristol I was taken into the publick bands. I have not now such Joy as I had. I See my Self the worst of Sinners and Stand amazed to think that I am out of hell. I see I can do nothing to the Glory of God. I find every immagination of my heart is only evil Continualy. But I know when Christ Speaketh the word I shall be made perfectly whole. In the mean time I begg your prayers that the Lord will give me power to fight manfully under his Banner against the world the flesh and the devil and may God power a double portion of his Spirit upon you and your Dear Brother and all his faith full ministers and grant that the word may be as Seed Sown into Good ground and that wee may bring forth fruit and hundred fold which is the prayers of me your unworthy Servant

Mary Thomas

May the 24th 1742

THE MORAVIANS IN BRISTOL

Edited by Madge Dresser

INTRODUCTION

The Moravians are a Protestant group who trace their origins back to the followers of the medieval Bohemian reformer Jan Hus. Their links with England are long standing and complex. According to some older sources, Hus was himself influenced by Wycliffe. After various splits a group calling itself the *Unitas Fratrum* emerged from its Husite origins in 1457. This early Church, ‘one of the very few pre-Lutheran dissents from the Roman Catholic church..’¹ took the Bible as their sole arbiter and held services in the language of local people. By the time of the Counter-Reformation the *Unitas Fratrum* was relentlessly persecuted. The last Bishop of this Bohemian Church (now gone underground) was Comenius, noted for his ecumenism and humanistic views on education, who was invited by Parliament in 1641 to help reform education in England. In 1660 Comenius dedicated his religious tract *Ratio Disciplinae* to ‘our Friends (of the Church of England)’.²

In 1722, a small group of Moravian adherents to the *Unitas Fratrum* fled to Saxony where they found asylum on the estate of Count Nikolaus von Zinzendorf. Zinzendorf, a Lutheran with Pietistic leanings, grew increasingly interested in the religious refugees on his estate. With them he founded the ‘Renewed Church of the *Unitas Fratrum*’ or United Brethren, more commonly known as the Moravians.³

Moravianism is very much a religion of the heart, stressing the importance of personal salvation through the love of the suffering Christ. It is also a religion of the ear, with its stress on music and its view of hymns as a form of extempore prayer. John Wesley was deeply influenced by this aspect of Moravian liturgy when he found himself on a storm-tossed ship en route to Georgia in the company of hymn-singing

¹ Ruth Strong, *The Moravians at Fulneck 1744 to the present day* (Fulneck, 1993), p. 1.

² James Hastings (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* (Edinburgh, 1918), p. 837.

³ Beverly Prior Smaby, *The Transformation of Moravian Bethlehem from Communal Mission to Family Economy* (Philadelphia, 1988), pp. 7ff.

Moravians.⁴ Four other related aspects of Moravian belief also distinguished the Brethren from what we might call 'mainstream evangelicalism'. The first of these was communitarianism. Wherever possible, Moravians founded religious settlements where the Brothers and Sisters could live communally and self-sufficiently. Herrnhut in Germany, Fulneck in Yorkshire, and Bethlehem in Pennsylvania are three of many such communitarian settlements flourishing in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

The second distinctive feature of the Moravians was their division of all congregation members into 'Choirs' which were based on sex and marital status. Strict segregation of the sexes was a basic tenet of Moravian life. Contact between the sexes was rigidly regulated. Although the congregation worshipped regularly together, the sexes did not mingle in such services. Each of the six Choirs (married men and women, single sisters and brothers, widows and widowers) had their own distinctive 'festivals' and liturgy and were ministered to by their own Choir 'labourer'.⁵ In both fully-fledged settlements and the less self-sufficient congregations, communal living quarters for the single brothers and sisters and the widows were built whenever possible. But, though unregulated contact between the sexes was seen as a distraction from piety, one should not conclude that the Moravians promoted the celibate life. Marriage was a keystone of Moravian values. But it was marriage arranged by the Elders of the congregation and decided by lot. The use of the lot was seen as a way of garnering the views of the Saviour Himself. No-one was forced to marry an 'approved' candidate, but expulsion loomed for those who married without permission. The lot was also used to choose which members to admit, how to discipline erring Brethren, and even, on occasion, what course of action to take in regard to travel, business ventures and the like.

The symbolism and liturgy of Moravianism were also distinctive. It seems to have drawn both from the earlier traditions of the *Unitas Fratrum* and the writings and pronouncements of Zinzendorf and his immediate circle.⁶ The 'blood and wounds' imagery of many of the sermons, hymns and private devotional writings of the Moravians has been the subject of much controversy. At one level, such symbolism derives directly from Zinzendorf's emphasis on the centrality of Christ's suffering. But there are intriguing similarities between some of the images employed by the Brethren and those used in late medieval Christian mystical writing.⁷

⁴ C.J. Podmore, 'The Bishops and the Brethren: Anglican Attitudes to the Moravians in the Mid-Eighteenth Century', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 41 (1990), p. 623.

⁵ The minister of the congregation was minister to the married men and his wife to the married women. The labourers for the other Choirs had the status of assistant ministers.

⁶ J. Taylor Hamilton and Kenneth G. Hamilton, *History of the Moravian Church. The renewed Unitas Fratrum 1722-1957* (Bethlehem, new edition 1983), pp. 13 ff.

⁷ See Clifford Towson, *Moravian and Methodist* (1957).

The 'Love Feasts', Pedelaviums and ritual kissing of hands and feet,⁸ possibly modelled on the practices of the early Christian Church, were another important and distinctive characteristic of Moravian worship. These ceremonies along with the use of candles, processions, instrumental music and ritual dress⁹ added an aesthetic dimension more commonly associated with Catholicism than evangelical Protestantism. As such they were ripe for exploitation by opponents of Moravianism. George Whitefield, for instance, in his *Expostulatory Letter to Count von Zinzendorf* (1753) refers disapprovingly to many such features and hints darkly at the use of incense or 'something like it' at Moravian ceremonies. The Brethren were certainly no crypto-Catholics, but their liturgy and symbolism left them open to such misrepresentation.

The Moravian Church was also distinguished by its elaborate international organizational structure. By the mid-eighteenth century, Moravian missionaries operated on a global scale. They were the first by half a century to take an interest in the souls of those Africans enslaved in the Caribbean. Moravian evangelists first visited England as early as 1727, founded a religious society in concert with the Wesleyans in 1738, and were given Parliamentary approval in 1747. They rejected identification with Old Dissent on account of their Episcopal structure and made strenuous attempts to demonstrate their loyalty to the British Sovereign, despite their intrinsic reluctance to take oaths, bear arms or participate in organised politics. Their close relationship with the Wesleyans is well documented. The two groups worshipped together in Fetter Lane in London until a bitter split in 1745.¹⁰ There were, by the late eighteenth century, nine major Moravian congregations in Great Britain as well as a number of smaller congregations and chapels.

The Bristol association with Moravianism is clearly outlined in the first text printed here.¹¹ Such associations go back to 1739 when John Wesley brought back a Moravian evangelist to Bristol 'to visit his Bands', a Moravian innovation adapted by Wesley. Wesley, George Whitefield and the Countess of Huntingdon were all closely involved with Moravian evangelists and enthusiasts by the 1740's. The first Moravian to settle in Bristol, in 1742, was a Sister Marsden, a former London Wesleyan. In 1745 the popular evangelist John Cennick, with his Kingswood collier friend Samuel Tippett, went to London to meet the Moravian writer James Hutton. The next year, Sisters Marsden and Hardern organized Moravian preachers to come and preach in Bristol. A Moravian society was settled in

⁸ See Hamilton and Hamilton, *History of the Moravian Church*, p. 38. The ritual kissing was stopped in 1769 after a Synod decision. On the love feasts, see Rev. H. Klinestaith, *Divine Providence or historical records relative to the Moravian church from its first formation to the present time*, (Ayr/ Glasgow, 1881, p. 32).

⁹ See Elizabeth Lehman Meyers, *A Century of Moravian Sisters* (1918) on ritual dress.

¹⁰ Podmore, 'The Bishops and the Brethren'; idem, 'The Fetter Lane Society 1738', *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, 46 (1988); idem, 'The Fetter Lane Society', *ibid.*, 47 (1990); Towlson, *Moravian and Methodist*; William G. Addison, *The Renewed Church of the United Brethren 1722–1930* (1932).

¹¹ See the entry for 26 January 1758.

the city in 1748 under the temporary care of the Brethren Syms and Francis Okely, the latter an Oxford graduate.¹² That same year, the Moravian Bishop Johannes von Watteville reported that:

... there are some delightful souls there and the whole society is anxiously waiting for the Brethren to reach there. My heart pained me when I was there and considered the condition of the population. . . . There are all sorts of sects there and why should not the Brethren have a share?¹³

In 1754, von Zinzendorf himself visited Bristol with his wife and in the next year the Moravian Congregation was formally established. In 1756, the Moravians moved from their temporary Avon Street dwelling in the insalubrious Temple area to the more respectable Magdalen Lane in St. James. There the Chapel and its congregation survived until the demolition of the site in the early 1970's to make way for the Bristol Eye Hospital. The Bristol congregation was always small, never much above 200 throughout the eighteenth century. Its social composition was complex. There was a tiny elite of propertied members (mainly female) and prosperous tradesmen, a majority of craftspeople and artisans in the middle, and a tail of servants (largely female) and those artisans and small tradespeople who suffered from unstable economic circumstances. By the end of the period, newer professions such as book-keeper and clerk gain new prominence, but the congregation as a whole becomes overwhelmingly female.¹⁴

Sources

The Moravians are a well-documented group and the archives of the Bristol Moravians are a particularly rich if under-researched source. Most of the Bristol material is housed in the University of Bristol's Special Collection, though some documents have found their way to Moravian Church House in London which is itself in the process of transferring much of its collection to the Moravian Collection of the John Rylands Library at the University of Manchester. Most of the extracts included in this selection are from the University of Bristol, which has an array of printed secondary works in both English and German on the Moravians dating from the eighteenth century, including theological works, hymn books, histories of the Moravian Church, biographies of Moravian notables and even anti-Moravian

¹² *A Short Sketch of the Work Carried on by the Ancient Protestant Episcopal Moravian Church ... in the West of England and South Wales from 1740*, Part II (n.d., c. 1900), pp. 2–3.

¹³ His report of 13 June 1748 from on board the Grampus is in A. Hasse, 'Provincial Manuscripts' at Moravian Church House, London.

¹⁴ Madge Dresser, 'Delightful Souls: the Bristol Moravians 1746–1834', unpublished paper presented to Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society in 1992.

tracts, as well as the manuscript material from the Bristol congregation itself.

Apart from ministers' diaries (discussed below), the workings of the congregation can be gleaned from two other sources which also have a virtually unbroken run from the mid-eighteenth century. The first of these is the Elders' Conference Minutes. The Elders, a group which included the minister and his wife and the labourers (or assistant ministers) for the single brothers and sisters, were responsible for the social and spiritual discipline of the congregation. They determined, with the help of the lot, who was to be admitted to membership of the congregation, who could take holy communion, who could marry whom, and what sort of punishment or advice should be meted out to their fellow brethren. The minutes of their meetings offer much information on the way values were maintained within the congregation and the particular circumstances of individual members.

The Committee Minutes are similarly extensive. These were the minutes of the committee responsible for the financial well-being of the congregation. Here membership was exclusively male, and included not only the minister and labourer for the single brethren, but also the more prominent businessmen of the congregation along with a few more humble members who were elected by the wider congregation. These minutes offer a detailed picture of the material preoccupations of the Brethren including their relations with the Provincial and International bodies of the Moravian Church. Discussions about the plight of indebted members and those seeking financial advice abound in these minutes giving the historian a rich source for the development of Bristol's economy in the eighteenth century.

The manuscript collection also includes 'memorabilia' which were annual reports written by the minister. These give a breakdown of changes in congregation membership and sometimes mention events of wider civic importance, such as epidemics and political upheaval. Further 'memoirs', obituaries and wills of members associated with Bristol (and its satellite Kingswood and Bath congregations), of varying length and quality, together offer an insight into the personal motivations and life styles of Moravian women and men from the beginning of the eighteenth century. All the sources reveal in particular the important roles women played as activists, elders, patrons, hymn writers and assistant ministers in this increasingly female congregation. Sex roles shaped the religious life of Brethren and Sisters and were themselves shaped by religious principles.¹⁵

Some of the manuscript material was circulated to all Moravian congregations and illuminates Moravian Church history in general. Congregational accounts (weekly meditations and comment), for example, were circulated in manuscript form amongst the congregations

¹⁵ Madge Dresser, 'Sisters and Brethren: power and propriety amongst the Bristol Moravians 1746–1834' (paper presented to the Women's History Network Conference, Nottingham, September 1992) and idem., 'Sisters and Brethren: women's religious experience in the eighteenth century – the case of the Bristol Moravians' (paper presented to the Womens' History Group, London, 1993).

and offer information on, *inter alia*, missionary activity. These accounts also complement a good run of minutes of the various Synods, the Moravian Church's supreme decision-making body.

The three categories of sources printed here consist of extracts from the memoirs of two founder members of Bristol and Kingswood congregations,¹⁶ the diary of an early Bristol minister, and the diary of the assistant minister or labourer for the Single Brethren's Choir in Bristol. Memoirs were circulated amongst the congregations as a way of providing inspirational role models and cautionary examples to the Brethren at large. Although to some extent formulaic in their recounting of spiritual turmoil and salvation, the individual experience and personality of each individual does, to varying extents, shine through. Tippett's first hand account of a collier's encounter with Whitefield and Cennick earns it a place in this collection. The memoir also challenges the popular picture of Kingswood miners as an undifferentiated bunch of lawless ruffians. Tippett had property, we know, because he bequeathed some of it to the Moravian Church in Kingswood. Yet he daily risked his life in the coalpits well into his old age. Hannah Nelson's less fulsome memoir is one of many in the Bristol collection which recounts a woman's quest for spiritual autonomy.

Moravian ministers, appointed by the central 'Unity' of the international Moravian Church, were often of continental stock in the eighteenth century, so it is no surprise that the two Bristol ministers who feature most in the other two texts are Lawrence Nyberg, a Swede¹⁷ and George Traneker, a Dane.¹⁸ Nyberg's diary was kept from 1756 to June 1763. At times written in a retrospective mode, it variously refers to Nyberg in the third and the first person possibly indicating that Nyberg's wife or assistant minister (Anton Seiffert) compiled the diary from Nyberg's own notes. The content of the ministers' diaries reflects the personality and pre-occupations of the individual ministers. Some restrict themselves to a rather formulaic account of sermons preached and Scripture portions read. But in Nyberg's a personal voice can be heard. The extracts are of necessity brief and chosen with a view to giving the reader an idea both of the early development of the Moravian congregation in Bristol and the distinctive and intensive round of religious observance they enjoyed.

¹⁶ Kingswood and Bath were 'sister' or satellite congregations under the aegis of Bristol and they often shared personnel or services.

¹⁷ Born in 1728 and ordained as a Lutheran minister, he joined the Moravians when serving in Pennsylvania and then worked in London and Dublin as well as on the Continent before becoming a Moravian minister in 1754. Nyberg and his New York born wife Martha (1725?–1793) ministered at Bristol for nearly seven years from 1756 before moving to Haverfordwest, Leominster, Bath and finally Fulneck, from whence Nyberg returned to Sweden for the last twelve years of his life, dying in 1792.

¹⁸ Born in Jutland and educated at the University of Copenhagen, he changed from Pietism to join the Brethren, who were then outlawed in Denmark and was disowned by his father, a lawyer. After working in Yorkshire in the late 1750s he served as labourer in Bristol from 1763 to 1768. In 1783 he was consecrated a Bishop and died at Fulneck in 1802.

A more substantial extract is offered from a shorter document, that kept by the assistant ministers responsible for the Single Brethren. Although this Diary was kept by three successive 'labourers', included here is a fairly complete extract of that portion kept by Brother Parminter, a former Congregationalist and Presbyterian who was in his early fifties when he came briefly to work in Bristol.¹⁹ Full of lively detail about communal life amongst the single brethren it has a fascinating immediacy about it. The assiduous care exercised over the spiritual and temporal well-being of single brethren in band and class meetings demonstrate clearly the continuity between pastoral care and modern social work.

Though their philanthropy contributed much to the life of the city, there are few Moravians now left in Bristol. Moravian Road and the Kingswood Chapel are perhaps the best remembered remnants of a long and fascinating history. In Britain as a whole, there are fewer than forty congregations. Yet the missionary origins of the Moravians have born fruit. Of the thousand Moravian congregations still functioning today, the largest are in Africa.

¹⁹ Andrew Parminter, who was born in Barnstaple, Devon in 1716, refers to himself as a former Presbyterian, and had trained as a Congregational minister at Philip Doddridge's academy in Northampton before becoming a Moravian. He died in Bedford in 1799, having served as labourer for single brethren in Yorkshire and Bedford as well as Bristol: for his Bedford years see E. Welch (ed.), *The Bedford Moravian Church in the Eighteenth Century* (Bedfordshire Historical Record Society, 68, 1989), especially pp. 242–6.

1.

[Extracts from the diary of Bristol Congregation volume 1 covering the period April 28 1756 to June 21 1763 during Br. and Sisr.¹ Nyberg's Residence and Br. Tranecker from June 21 '63 to July 31 '63.]

13 Friday² [August 1756]. Was a day of Grace, which will not easily be forgotten in Bristol. At 3 O'clock in the afternoon the whole Congregation met together in the New Hall in Magdalen-Lane, and formed a circle round. I [Nyberg] begun the Love Feast with: May Jesus Blood and Righteousness, Fill and adorn this dwelling-Place. At the Vers: I that above this chosen Ground . . . We all kneeled down, and I prayed to the Lamb to consecrate this Place, with the Sprinkling of His holy Blood, for the preaching of His Wounds, and every church-Transaction – To let his Presence be felt, whenever We met together, and to comfort us by his precious Nearness – To make us a Salt and a Blessing to this City and n[e]ighbourhood – and to banish all the Spirits of Terror and Darkness from this Hill and Habitation of Peace etc – The tender love-Tears shed on this Occasion were innumerable, and the Glory of the Wounds Shone bright. I then wellcomed the Congregation to this Hill, by some verses made on the Occasion – and so the Love Feast begun, during which the weighty Occurance of this day was circumstantially related – We could only have wished, to have the Dear Disciple³ or Johannes⁴ with us, to see this little Hall, as convenient as if built for us; and more especially the *feel* what we all felt. After the Love-Feast was another Meeting in which I spoke shortly on the Watch Word.⁵ Then followed the Absolution, and *First Enjoyment of Jesus Corpse and Blood, in this Hall*. It was a tremendous transaction indeed, such as I have seen but few hitherto. The Brs and Srs said: It was as if the Congregation had been settled anew – Sisr. Hanah Palmer was confirmed. Br. Bryant from Bath and Sr. Herzerin from Lambs-Acre, were present as witnesses of that great Grace bestowed this day on Bristol Congregation.

14 Saturday [August 1756]. We had a Host-Communion, and Liturgy. In the Evening I went to Kingswood.

15 Sunday [August 1756]. I preached on Mark. 16. Go and preach the

¹ A variety of abbreviations for brother(s), brethren, and sister(s) are used in these texts and these have been preserved.

² In the original, the days of the week are indicated by Latin symbols, e.g. a crescent moon for Monday.

³ Count Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf, for whom see introduction. The use of affectionate terms such as 'Dear' here, or 'Mama' for the Count's first wife, reflects the emphasis on a religion of the heart, expressed in emotive terms.

⁴ Johannes von Watteville, a bishop of the Church: see below for his visits to Bristol.

⁵ Watch Words (often abbreviated to W.W.) and doctrinal texts were exhortatory passages from the Bible, compiled by Zinzendorf and the Herrnhut elders and in 1731 printed as a collection of texts for the whole year.

Gospel; and kept a Society⁶-meeting on: O sink us still deeper, in thy wound o' Lamb! At 3 O'Clock I preached the *last Sermon* in the *Great Garden*, on 2 Pet. 2.1. I gave out that on Sunday next, the Hall in Magdalen-Lane would be opened for publick preaching. To the Society I read some Diaspora Accounts.⁷ Afterwards the Congregation had a Separate Meeting, in which I spoke on the Watch Word. The sons of the strangers who love Thy name and join themselves, them will I also bring to my holy Mount – and took notice of all the Blessings the Congregation had enjoyed *in that place* (*Avon-Street in the Great Garden*) especially at the Disciples, Disciplesses visit,⁸ and *settling* this *Congregation* on January 26 1755 by our dearest Johannes. We concluded this Meeting with a few Verses out of Te Agnum. Last of all the Communicants had the Cup of Thanks⁹ (it being the doctrinal day thereof) and thus we bound ourselves anew to feed on Jesus's Merit, til we breathe forth our Spirit; the late sacramental Breezes were again renewed, and Thus with singing: *Bless our going out o! Lord* [etc.] We took leave of this disagreeable part of the City, where our Brn have lived in obscurity these 9 years (1747)

16 Monday [August 1756]. Several Brn and Sisters came to assist us in moving our Furniture, Beds . . . to Magdalen-Lane in this new place, where they felt so well. In the Evening I read the weightly discourse on : The son of Man – The Antiphon or our Watch Word was: Thyself hast call'd us hither And thus we're come together and thus We went to Sleep in our new House.

17 Tuesday [August 1756]. The Children had a Festival Love Feast, at which many of the Parents were present as Guests, and held us at the Conclusion, to beg on their knees, for bloody Grace for themselves and Children. Coming to *Kingswood* I found some of our People admiring the Hymn: dear Jesu wherein wert thou to be blamed – and wanted much to learn the Tune – A wind of Grace filled our hearts whilst we were singing together. I preached on John 19. I am the good Shepherd – and then read out of the Weeks.

19 Thursday [August 1756]. Returning to Bristol, I found the Single Sisters ready for a Love Feast, it being their *doctrinal day*¹⁰ after which I read to them an admirable homily out of the weeks, kept in Bethel on July 7 last.

⁶ In the eighteenth century the Moravians distinguished between 'Society' and 'Congregation' membership. People belonging to various Protestant denominations might apply for admission to a local Moravian Society without relinquishing their original affiliation. Congregational membership was more exclusive and required members to submit completely to the discipline and lifestyle of the Moravian Church.

⁷ The reports of missionaries circulated for the edification of all Moravian congregations.

⁸ Count and Countess von Zinzendorf visited Bristol in 1754.

⁹ A specialized form of the Love Feast where those facing a common task covenanted together to carry it out faithfully.

¹⁰ Each Choir had its own festivals when Love Feasts were held and particular scriptural passages were read.

20 Friday [August 1756]. Being now Settled in our Habitation, I read the Watch-Word: *Go and dwell in Bethel, and build an Altar there* – and then kept a blessed Liturgy to The Head so full of Bruises. . . . In the Classes, all unanimously declared what Grace they enjoyed at the Consecration of this Hall, on Friday last.

21 Saturday [August 1756]. In the morning-Blessing. We thought on the first heathen mission, and according to the W Word thought on the Copts – I wrote a Letter of Invitation to Br. Munster and Rice and Pugh.

22 Sunday [August 1756]. I preached at Kingswood with Grace on Rom. 13. Put the on the Lord Jesus! At 3 O'Clock postmeridian our Hall in Madgdalen-Lane was *opened for publick preaching* and was exceedingly crowded. It was a very pleasant sight to see all so attentive. . . .¹¹ I first prayed the Church Litany, and then preached with all my heart, on 1. Cor. 1. We preach Christ crucified. . . . Afterwards our small society also had a L. Feast to wellcome them also to this new place; read to them American Accounts. and then received Arthur Palmer m[arried] Br. into the Society – After a short *Vestry*,¹² The Comunicants had a happy Prostration.¹³

23 Monday [August 1756]. The Revd. Mr. Chapman introduced me into the company of 4. Church of England Clergymen, who are wellwishers to the Brethren, but alas! chiefly I'm afraid to themselves.¹⁴ I related to them the blessed state of the awakened Ministers in Switzerland, and we parted good Friends, as We met. In the afternoon We marked out the Ground for digging the Foundation for our Chapel. and in the Evening read some beautifull discourses out of the Weeks to the Congregation.

24 Tuesday [August 1756]. The Foundation was dugg for our Chapel, with the W. Word: I will set my Tabernacle among you – In the evening I preached to more strangers than usual on 2 Cor. 5. The Love of Christ constraineth us – This night Sister Nyberg was taken very ill.

25 Wednesday [August 1756]. At my entering into *Kingswood*, a crowd of people met me; with 2 Men and 1. big Boy, whom they brought dead out of the coal-pits – it was a very dismal sight! After the preaching; Sisr. Mary Tippett was safely delivered of a son.

26 Thursday [August 1756]. I set out for Bath, and found Br. Bryant

¹¹ Omissions in this version from the original text are denoted as follows:

... means part of a sentence has been omitted.

... means one or more sentences within a particular day's entry have been omitted.

**** means entries for one or more days have been omitted.

¹² A meeting of virtually all the adult members of the congregation, confined largely to the early years of the Bristol congregation, as by 1756 the most important work was performed by the 'Committee'. A few vestry minutes survive in 'Committee minute book A' in the Bristol Moravian collection.

¹³ An informal prayer in which worshippers prostrated themselves on the ground.

¹⁴ The Rev. Walter Chapman of Bradford on Avon (a prebend of Bristol Cathedral) and, most likely, Richard Symes, James Rouquet, James Brown and Richard Hart, who formed a group of pietist-cum-evangelical clergy in Bristol, accused by Samuel Walker of Truro in 1756 of being 'too much infected with mysticism, Moravianism and methodism'. Chapman, a former Oxford methodist, was often associated doctrinally with the Moravians and his daughter married one (the painter Spilsbury).

very tender, ever since Aug. 13. His children block'd about me, begging to come under the Brs. Care. I preached on Luke 24. Did not our hearts burn . . . Then kept a Society-Meeting, told our people, that if any of them could contribute anything towards our Building in Bristol, We would not refuse it.

27 Friday [August 1756]. I found Br. Munster, Rice, Saml, Utley, 2 M[arrie]d B, 5 Single Sisters, and 1 Widow at Bristol, from Lambs-Acre, being come to assist at the tomorrows-Transactions. In the Evening Br. Munster kept a very feeling society Meeting, and afterwards a Liturgy. We then made a draught of the Writing to be put in the Cornerstone; and so went to rest.

28 Saturday [August 1756]. Was another day of Grace for Bristol. The whole Congregation and Society being met at 1 o'Clock at noon I put them in mind of the many Blessings enjoy'd this whole Month; telling them that We were now come together to *lay the Foundation-Stone for a Brethrens-Chapel at Bristol* – whereupon I shewed them the writing and Confession of Faith; laid in a Leaden-Box, which stood on the Tables – Having sung: what we're now to do, Be with Blood mixed through! Being placed in the Garden, We sung: Thy Spirit of Gladness give us power . . . and then, I then read the writing aloud, as follows:

In the year after the Birth of our Lord God Jesus Christ, 1756, and in the thirtieth Year of our Beloved King George 2d. King of Great Britain, France and Ireland etc. The Cornerstone of this Chapel was laid on the 28. day of August for the use of the Congregation in Bristol, in union with the Church of the Unitas Fratrum, who at this present Time Keep to the word of Jesus' meritorious Sufferings, and carry the Glad Tidings of Salvation, and offer free Grace in the Blood of Jesus to poor Sinners among the different Nations of the Earth. In the full assurance, that Jesus Christ is the chief Cornerstone of His Church, purchased by His own most precious Blood, We Build this Chapel in Faith, that Jesus Christ the crucified, with all his Wounds and Blood shall remain the only Text therein and We have caused to be put into the Cornerstone thereof This Writing, that after-ages, into whose hands this may fall, may know that at this Time, there lived in Bristol a little despised but happy Flock, who met at this Place, and paid their tenderest devotions to the Humanity of God, fed on his bleeding wounds, and therein expire – and whose Bones were deposited in the Burrying-Ground; adjoining this Chapel. This We do in the Name of Jesus, the Elder of our Church and with the Approbation of His dear People, by whose Means the Gospel was again revived in England, and brought even unto us; and with the Blessing of the Disciple, whom Jesus loveth, our venerable Elder Br. Ludovicus¹⁵

¹⁵ Count von Zinzendorf.

and his son Johannes. Ep. Occid.,¹⁶ Leonhartus Ep. Orient,¹⁷ Ignatius the di[sciples?]) . . . of all the Single Brethren choirs – As also, Anna Caritas, The Mother of all the Congregation¹⁸ Anna Johannah the discipless of the S.S.¹⁹ Benigna the chief Labouress of all the m[arie]d Choirs²⁰ Agnes Chief Labouress of the Virgs. and G. Girls.²¹ And with the good wishes of the whole Synode, expecially of the Revd. John Gambold Ep. in Anglia²² and A.G. Spangenberg (Vic. Gen. in America.)²³ Petrus Vice-Oeconomus in America²⁴ Fred. Marschall Ordd.²⁵ in Bedford James Hutton the English Jeremiah,²⁶ John West, Pfleger of London Congregation.²⁷ Traneker Ord. of Grace Hall in Yorkshire. Brodersen Vice-Ord. in London Teltschig, Oeconomus in Ireland²⁸ W. Horne Ord. in Ballymena in Ireland Schlicht Ord. in Dublin O. Rice, Vice Ord. in Lambs-Acre Paul Munster Pfleger of Bristol L. T. Nyberg Ordinary of Bristol.

The Texts for this day were: 1. *The Name of the Church*; Rev. 3, 12. A Pillar in the Temple of our God – The ground on which that's grounded, is Jesus and his Blood. 2. *The Watch-Word*: Exod. 13, 19. *God will surely visit you* as well as other Cities of peace, and make our undertakings to prosper – 3. *The Old Testament Text*: Exod. 23, 25. He shall bless thy Bread, and thy water – My sweet wind; my heavenly Bread – 4. *Ethic-Text*: Luke 17, 20. The Kingdom of God cometh not with Observation. It is a Mystery. 5. *Liturgic-Text*: Job 13, 1. My Eye

¹⁶ Johannes von Watteville was married to Zinzendorf's daughter Benigna and apparently entitled 'Western Bishop'.

¹⁷ Leonard Dober was presumably entitled 'Eastern Bishop'.

¹⁸ Probably Anna Nitschmann senior, one of the original Moravian refugees at Herrnhut.

¹⁹ Anna Nitschmann junior, a leading figure in the movement as administrator, missionary and hymn-writer, became Zinzendorf's second wife in 1757. She had led the movement for a separate Choir for single sisters.

²⁰ Benigna von Zinzendorf, one of the Count's daughters.

²¹ Agnes von Zinzendorf, one of the Count's daughters.

²² John Gambold, an Anglican rector who joined the Brethren, became a schoolteacher and pastor in London and then Bishop in 1754, with oversight over the Church in England. He was a prolific writer.

²³ August Gottlieb Spangenberg, who had organized the Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel, which promoted missions in England and abroad, was in charge of operations in America from 1744 to 1762.

²⁴ Peter Bohler, a Lutheran pietist who was ordained by the Count and played a leading role in the early years of the Moravian Church in England, especially influencing John Wesley in 1738. His title may refer to his supervision over the communal settlement ('oeconomy') at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

²⁵ Ord., Ordd. and Ordinary refer to ordained ministers of the Moravian Church.

²⁶ A London bookseller, prolific writer, publisher of the first Moravian hymnbook in English and mainstay of the Fetter Lane Society in London.

²⁷ A London silkdyer and co-founder of the London congregation, who acted as a trustee for the purchase of the Bristol chapel. A Pfleger was a chaplain who attended to the spiritual welfare of members of a choir.

²⁸ Johann Toltschig was one of the first Moravian evangelists to visit England, in 1728, and in 1748 succeeded John Cennick as superintendent of the Brethren's work in Ireland.

hath seen, mine Ear hath heard, and understood it. 6. *Childrens.* W.W. I know on whom my Faith's repos'd. The Names of our Brn. and Srs. and Children, together with the Visitors, being read, We sung: Let all our names in lifes blest rolls... I than stepp'd down into the Foundation, together with Br. Munster and Rice, and Sung: The Ground of our Profession, is Jesus and His *Blood* . . . and at *this* Word, We pushed the Stone, which stood on its Edge, into its Place – I then put the Leaden-Box, containing the Writings, into the stone, and covered it with a Strong Leaden-sheet – We then sung: O that above this chosen ground – Br. Munster prayed the *Lamb* to bless this our undertaking; We then stepped up again, and sung by Choirs: sure as thou livest – at last I pronounced the Blessing: The Lord bless you and keep you . . .! It was an awefull sight, to see such a Number of people, in the Eyes of a large City singing and praying, and not one of our nighbours, who with respect looked at us, attempted to disturb us – The Lamb himself has pronounced his Peace over this place. Amen. The Brs and Srs stood a good while pausing and could hardly resolve to leave the place feeling themselves so happy in the Lambs presence.

Thursday 26 [January 1758]. Being *Bristol-Congregation Birth-day*, We had a pleasant L.F. It was taken Notice, that there were 36 at the Settling of the Congregation in 1755 and now were 90; and only one sick, but no [illegible], and consequently not incurable. We recollect the following particulars about the Brns first acquaintance in this parts, viz: 1739 and 1740. Mr. J. Wesley brought Br. Teltschig to Bristol, to visit his Bands, and to try the Spirits; At this Time he got acquainted with Cennick. 1741. Br. Bohler²⁹ arrived here from America, February 27th. 1742 Sr. Marsden having left Mr. Wesley in London, came to live at Bristol, as the first Brns. acquaintance here. 1743. Br. and Sr. Spangenberg came to Bristol, to meet Mr. Whitefield, and lodged at the Lamb, without Lawford's Gate, where Marsden went to see them – 1744. Br. Gambold passed thro' in his Way to Wales. 1745. Br. Tippett went with Cennick to London and got acquainted with Br. Hutton. 1746. Sisr. Marsden went to London, and invited the Brn. to come to Bristol. The same year Br. Horne came to Tetherton,³⁰ and also preached at *Kingswood*. 1746. Sisr. Hardern, Marsden etc. visited Tetherton and invited Br. Horne, who accordingly came and kept the *first Meeting in Broadmead*. 1748. The *Society* was *Settled*. . . . Johannes came and baptized Gussenb[auer]s Child. 1750. Mama, Johannes, A. Johana, and Henry 28.³¹ paid Bristol a Visit. 1751 Br. Bohler came . . . with Br. Nyberg from London on purpose to find a place for a Chapel but could find none. 1754 The disciple, and discipless paid Bristol a distinguishing visit, which proved a very great Blessing – 1755. January 26. This

²⁹ In 1741, after his return from the Carolinas, he travelled with Humphreys and other Methodist preachers.

³⁰ A congregation near Malmesbury in Wiltshire.

³¹ The Countess von Zinzendorf, Johannes von Watteville, Anna Nitschmann the younger. I cannot identify Henry 28 and there is no record elsewhere of this visit.

Congregation was settled by Br. Johanes.³² Br. and Sr. Schlichts were the first Congregation Labourers, who were succeeded 1756. By Br. and Sr. Nybergs . . . June 19 This Estate was purchased Aug. 13 The first L.F. in this Hall 28 The Cornerstone of Bristol-Chapel laid. Sept. 8: [The Cornerstone] of Kingswood ditto – 1757. June 22: Consecration of Kingswood Chapel 25: [Consecration] of Bristol ditto.

2.

[Memoir of Hannah Nelson, extracted from the diary of the Bristol Moravian minister for 12 April 1763]

[Today] was the *Burial* of Sisr. *Nelson's Tabernacle*,³³ at which there were many strangers, especially Methodists, who all behaved very well. and a great stillness reigned during the whole Transaction.

Obituary. *Hannah Nelson* (born Mogg) left the following account of her Life; I was born at Shippenn-Montagu Somerset, January 24 1706. My Father was of the Church of England, a very zealous Man, he educated me in a very strict manner, but I being of a lively disposition, could not condescend to his compulsive measures. He died August 1727 and I was soon after married to William Oakden, who proved a very wild and extravagant man by Him I had one Child John, now in the Congregation. My Husband being a Gentleman's servant, we travelled from place to place, first to London, then to Shropshire, and at last to Bath. About 1744, I was first awaken'd by the preaching of the Gospel. I was brought in very great distress indeed; and what added to my misery, was my Husband opposing my going to hear the word. When Br. Cennick³⁴ came to Bath, I was joined to his Society – Some months after this, I heard a discourse on this Text: Whosoever believeth on me shall not perish, but have everlasting Life; this proved a blessed moment to my soul, it was to me, as it our Saviour had evidently hung bleeding before my Eyes. This sensation continued, so that I could Speak to our Saviour as a friend to another – But there being at that time a dispute between the preachers about doctrine, I lost sight of our Saviour and was brought into darkness. In April 1746, I removed to Bristol, in hopes of hearing the Brethren; but there were none at that Time – 1748. Br. Gussenbauer resided here, just at the Time my Husband was taken ill. Br. Gussenbauer spoke with Him about our Saviour's love to Sinners, which proved a Blessing to my Husband, So that He actually departed in peace August 1748 – I was then in a deal of Trouble, and outward poverty, However my Son sent me some money whereby I was enabled to take a Shop and House in Horse Street. About this Time the Brns Society was settled at Bristol, to which I belonged; but as I married

³² On 26 January 1755. See the typescript copy of John Cennick's 'A brief historical account of events that led to the beginning of a Brethren's Congregation at Kingswood' in Bristol Moravian Collection.

³³ I.e. her body.

³⁴ See the introduction to this section and to the Methodist testimonials.

James Nelson without the Brns Consent, I was turned out of the Society for it by Br. Okely, 1750. I frequented the preaching still and was some time after readmitted. When the Brsn. Congregation was settled at Bristol January 26 1755 I was present, but was [n]o[t] returned till April 6 following – October 5 follows I was admitted to the holy Communion the first Time with the Brn. – This was a great Feast to my Soul. I have had many Blessings among the Brs, and remember especially the first L[ords].S[upper]. Br Nyberg kept in this Hall, it was to me as if our Saviour had been bodily present among us – The Congregation and Choir-Opportunities were always dear to me – Thus far her own account – [an account of her illness and death follows].

3.

[Memoir of the Life of Mr. Samuel Tippett (extracted from a lengthened statement, written by himself).^{35]}]

I was born in 1711 . . .?³⁶ in the parish of Bitton, Gloucestershire. My father died in my infancy. My mother, as I grew older, did her best to make me attend school, but it was hard, as I was of a lightminded disposition and very fond of play with other boys. This made my mother treat me sharply. At times I had serious thoughts about dying; and these made me then wish that I have never been born, or that I had died on my mother's breast, believing that it had been thus I should have gone to heaven. I felt myself to be so bad – so disposed and so ready to tell lies and to use naughty words, that the thought presented itself, whatever is to become of you.

I frequently resolved to mend my course of life – and then I wished I had one or two companions like myself, with whom I could go to church, serve God and be religious. Sometimes, I wished I had lived in the days of our Saviour, when he was on the earth, feeling persuaded I should surely have loved and followed Him even unto death. When I read of his sufferings, death (and this was the only part of scripture which I took pleasure in) I sometimes wept so abundantly that I was forced to give up reading.

I am particularly mindful of one occasion when I was engaged rocking the cradle for my mother, I read a little book which I had casually met with. While so employed I felt something in my heart, which I had never experienced before. It seemed to me that had it been possible, I must melt away in tears before the Lord Jesus; and the covenant which I then made with him, I thought I should keep as long as I lived. But this wore off; and for want of proper care, as I grew older and my native corruption increased, I was led captive by it.

When 10 years of age, I went to work in the coalpit along with other boys, by whose company I became more and more hardened. Though

³⁵ An early twentieth-century copy of the original manuscript, now lost, is in A.C. Hasse's 'Kingswood memoirs', Box A1 Parcel A, Moravian Church House, London.

³⁶ These omissions and uncertainties are in the surviving transcript.

my miserable and self-condemned heart followed me . . . [and] in all way . . . disturbed me, yet I determined to silence it, by what ye world terms, "merry company. This was however all in vain. I was disappointed in everything I took in hand; and in the midst of mirth my . . . spirit became so oppressive that I knew I . . . to do. I could only sigh and say to myself, "O wretched creature! there is no one like unto thee." Sometimes I thought, if I had only different companions, I should be better and should [be] easier in my mind. But even this did not help me. Then I formed resolutions, to strive and mend myself; but when any temptation arose, the thought presented itself: it is time enough for me to turn to the Lord, for I am still young and may yet live a long while.

I often thought how my father had died of consumption and then I concluded I should die of the same disease and should thus have plenty of time to repent and to turn to the Lord. On the other hand the thought of my dangerous occupation terrified me daily; for I knew that frequently instances had arisen of men being killed in the pits and this might be my lot as well as that of others. In the midst of all my wildness and misery I daily prayed to the Lord to spare my life, not to suffer me to die a sudden death. Thus I went on sinning and repenting til' I was 25 (i.e. in 1736) I married my present wife. With her I have had 11 children, 6 of whom have gone before me to the Lord and 5 are still in this vale of tears. Two of these latter, i.e. my daughters, are to my joy connected with the Bns. Church, but over the 3 others, my sons, I have to weep daily at my Saviour's feet.

About the year 1739 Mr. George Whitefield³⁷ came to these parts and I went to hear him preach at a place called Hanham Mount. He spoke of the prodigal son returning to his father and how willing Jesus X was to receive every returning sinner. He described my wretched condition as exactly as if he had known me in most thoughts. He invited all such as me to go to Jesus assuring us that we should be welcomed. I thought this was too good news to be believed. Such a wretch as I was, one who had been fighting against the Lord all his life, he could never look on. He could not receive who trampled on His love and mercy. Still the testimony of the love of Jesus was like a hook in my heart, tho' I was ashamed to tell any one of it. Yet I thought, if this be true, nothing in all the world shall prevent me profiting by it, if Jesus will only accept such a poor sinner.

Soon after I heard Mr. John Cennick preach his *1st sermon* under the *sycamore tree* near Mr. Wesley's School. He expounded of 1st Chapter of St. John and said something about his own experience.³⁸ Then my heart was broken; all my sins stared me in the face; I thought my

³⁷ For Whitefield and his relations with the Wesley brothers see the introduction to the Methodist testimonials in this volume.

³⁸ The date was 14 June 1739, according to a marginal note in the manuscript. A footnote states that according to Cennick's own account he spoke to this text later that week.

companions would witness against me on the Last Day, because I had not only been the ruin of my own soul but of theirs also. I stood in . . . [illegible] ashamed to look any one in the face and thought that no man's condition was as bad as mine. I soon sought acquaintance with Mr. Cennick, got him to sleep at my house and opened my heart to him with all freedom. A certain eminent preacher of works and self denial had, about this time, great influence over me; and I began to strive and wrestle with the Lord by fasting and prayers and I attended the Holy Comunion, thinking by these things to find ease. But the more I thus strove, the more did my darkness, doubting and misery increase, so that I wished myself fare away from the society of all men. At last I grew so thick in what was called 'duty', that I looked upon every hour of sleep as lost time – and therefore I wished I might never sleep anymore.

While in this uncomfortable state, I experienced 2 or 3 remarkable preservations from death, when working in the coalpit; and the last escape with my life, was, to me, so evidently the merciful hand of providence, that I was comforted thereby, tho' I was bodily much hurt. I believed God would [not] . . . take me out of the world till He had granted me The forgiveness of my sins; for it was indeed this favour I was seeking after, tho in a wrong way.

Mr. Cenick appointed me to be a member of a "Band Meeting" along with 4 others and this also proved a blessing to me. Yet I often reasoned about the comfort I felt in my soul, thinking it was of man, and not of God. This at times occasioned me great perplexity. Then I began to reflect a good deal on my striving, in my own strength, to be happy. Finding that nothing came out of these attempts, but that I grew more and more miserable, hearing what the Lord Jesus had done and suffered for sinners, I determined to cast myself, as one weary and heavy-laden at His feet and to abide there. As I was once working in the coalpit, I laid my spiritual darkness and concern of heart before my Saviour and suddenly it was as if I heard a voice saying to me: 'I am Love and I do love thee'. What I felt at that moment, words cannot express. All my uneasiness of heart was gone. Him whom I had always been thinking to be angry with me, I now found to be my best friend and I might have gone to Him directly and at once. This impression of His mercy and grace remained with me; though it was sometimes disturbed by my natural depravity and baseness of my corrupt heart and this made me greatly perplexed.

Up to this time I was connected with Mr. Wesley's followers. But there are disputes, among the preachers and leading men vis the 2 Wesleys, George Whitefield etc. on doctrinal points, such as Perfection, Reprobation and the like. These subjects brought me into a reasoning spirit and made me very uneasy. Several meeting were held to settle the differences and to reconcile all parties.

This was however to no purpose; for in a little time, Mr. Cennick and 24 more of us were excluded from Mr. Wesley's Society. We took a little room where we met every evening so quickly that in a little while the place we had taken was too confined to hold us. On this account we

were obliged to keep our Lovefeast in a field and the Lord did indeed bestow a spirit of love upon us. When the winter was coming on, Br. Cenick resolved to build a Meeting House; and for this purpose we bought a piece of ground and began building. In spite of so much opposition we met with, it was covered in before winter. There we met together in love and our Saviour often favoured us [with] . . . his presence.

Hitherto, Br. Cenick had remained in connection [with] . . . Mr. Whitefield, tho' separated from Mr. Wesley. We all were attached to Cenick and looked on him as our Minister.³⁹ But the calls he received to go to other places, especially into Wiltshire made it impracticable to him to attend to us as best he and we could have liked.

For this reason we were served from time to time by other preachers, who after leaving Mr. Wesley, remained in following Mr. Whitefield. The enemy of souls took advantage of this; for while stress was laid of the differences of doctrine instead of the precious Gospel of X for all sinners – the seeds of contention were sown among us and the greatest confusion arose. My refuge during this turmoil was to the feet of Jesus, where, like Jeremiah I poured out the complaints of my affliction meanwhile our gracious Saviour ordered it so that Br. Cennick became associated with the Moravian Bn. and in the year 1745 I went [with him] to London and became acquainted with the Bn. there.

There I heard of Br. John Gambold, Jacob Rogers, James Hutton etc and I was also greatly edified by their private conversations with me. I often sighed and wished to see the same spirit of love and heartiness displayed among us at Kingswood as I saw and felt among these Brn. in London. On my return home I found that the Society which had numbered from 80 to 90 persons, now reduced to 30 or 40. This gave me great pain of mind, but I had recourse to Jesus, my never failing friend and was comforted. The preaching dropped and the work seemed at a stand-still.

I therefore, and [with] the consent of 2 or 3 more persons, wrote to the Bn. and begged they could come and take us under their nursing care. Their answer was [not very] encouraging. Nevertheless 4 or 5 Bn. of our number met every Sunday morning and our Saviour was often very nigh to our hearts. We joined together to tell Him all our troubles and He comforted us. I however continued writing to the Bn. because it was clear to my heart that if I could be under their care, I should be in my right place.

At last Br. E.L. Schlicht came and preached in Br. Cennicks Meeting House and I felt my heart knit to him. Soon after Br. Wm Horne came and preached twice and I felt the same union with him. My happiness

³⁹ The periodical *Weekly History* (a record of the ministry of Whitefield and his associates) no. 66 for 10 July 1742 contains a letter of Brother T-t a collier of Kingswood to Cennick dated 29 May: 'Though I am poor, yet I am rich. Though I am despised, yet in him I am precious. Though I am black, yet I am comely', signed S-I T-t. In no. 59 of 22 May, a Cennick letter of 26 April is quoted noting that the Kingswood society was very like the Moravians and 'much led after their way'.

was greatly increased when he told me that I might look on myself as under the Brs. care and that they would come once a month to labour among us. This was also a great comfort to several others who gathered together and me.

Some of the others however, seeing that we were about to introduce the brn., took possession of Br. Cenicks Meeting House in a tumultuous and forcible manner, when they found that he also had joined the Br.

Afterwards Brns Minister kept their meeting in my house and we were greatly refreshed by the visits of the Br. Johannes de Watteville, John Nitschman, Petrus Bohler – von Marschall etc. during the years 1746, 1747.

In 1754 I had the pleasure to see and converse with the late Count Zinzendorf at Bristol. I told him I was willing to cast in my lot [with]. . . . the Bn. thro' the world. He desired me to write to him when he had returned to London. I did so and expressed my mind more fully. Whereupon I was invited to go to the Synod then held at Lindsey House, Chelsea. I shall never forget what I saw, heard and felt there. With thousands of tears I thank my Saviour that it has been my lot to be brought to those people who preach meritorious sufferings and torments of Jesus. . . .

January 26 1755 a Brn. Congregation was settled at Bristol. This was a day which for many years I had wished to see. Through grace I had my lot and part among them. My heart was melted and sank down for shame of all my unworthiness before my Saviour who had brought me to this portion of His people, at last through manifold trials and temptations, both of an inward and outward nature. With them I am determined to spend my days, even if it be [with] the loss of all worldly things. If I have my Saviour – that is enough for me.

On August 22 1756 it was agreed to have a Chapel and Burial ground at Kingswood, as I really longed to see these things, ere I went home to the Lord. And Jesus has granted my request in this thing and in many other matters besides for which I heartily thank Him. And now my ardent prayer to God my Saviour is that all those who shall hear my dear Bn. preach in that place after my decease may feel what my poor heart has learned there of The Redeemer's grace of the power of His blood. I do indeed wish well to His cause, poor, needy as I am.

The older I grow the more my troubles increase, so that I have more need of my Saviour now than I ever had. My outward worldly circumstances, and my family affairs have taken up too much of my time and caused me pain. Yet my best friend is faithful to me and in His own good time will set all these things right. Now my chief concern is to have Him, my dear and only Lord, near to my poor heart and then all will end well.

Thus far our late Brother's own narrative.⁴⁰

As regards the interview he mentions having had with Count Zinzendorf

⁴⁰ The continuation may have been written by Br. Muller, then the associate minister for Kingswood, or Henry Sulger, the Swiss-born minister of Bristol.

in 1754 in Bristol, the following has to be added. The Count finding that the people wanted to be organised as a Congregation of the Bns Church, held a meeting with them and wished to know why they were desirous to leave their own Church. One person present said that the Gospel was not heard there and that they had known nothing of the atonement through Jesus, till they had heard this doctrine preached by the Bn – and that therein they had found life and true fellowship etc.

The Count replied that the Bn were not called nor did they preach in order to draw away people from their own denominations – but only to help to – and established them – in the truth upon which all real religion is founded, whereby the persons so benefitted might become a good savour of life to their fellows in their respective denominations.

This declaration of the Count so influenced the minds of several then present that they resolved to remain in their own Churches, whilst still as Society members enjoying the Bns. nursing care. But Br. Tippett finding that some held this view, got up and said: 'This is not what is wanted. Let us be a congregation of the Brn Church or nothing. Let us have all the priveleges the Bn can give or nothing.'

This gave a decided turn to the deliberation. The unanimous voice of the whole assembly was now either to have a Congregation settled in distinct union with the Bn. or to have no concession at all. It was in consequence of this decision, to which Br. T. had so much contributed that the Bristol Congregation, inclusive of those at Bath and Kingswood who held to the Brn, was settled January 26 '55.

In 1757 Br. Tippett gave a plot of ground on which to build a Chapel and for a Burial ground. This work was completed the same year. Our Brother was received into the Bns Church as a full member on Jan. 26. '55 and partook of the Holy Comunion. It was then he received a true impression and a right knowledge of what a congregation of Jesus really is. By his walk and conversation among men he evidenced that his whole heart was cleaving to Jesus and that he was indeed one of true Israel of God. Whoever beheld him at a public service in our Kingswood Chapel could not help being struck by his venerable countenance, so full of joy and peace and also of anxiety for the salvation of all who hear the word.

In several years before his departure he was heavily afflicted by gouty and rheumatic ailments. The pains he endured, added to his naturally warm and harty temper, made him somewhat peevish at times. But not a little was contributed thereto by the disappointments, losses he sustained in his business. . . .

About Christmas last, he contracted a cold which settled on his lungs with a cough. He expected that, as formerly often, this would go off with a fit of the gout. Instead thereof the cough increased, with wasting away of the flesh and loss of appetite, till his strength failed and he could no longer go to work in the coal-pit. He then concluded that this sickness was the messenger to take him home – He submitted with all cheerfulness. He settled his affairs and began with strong desire to look out for the blessed moment. But he was afraid of giving way to

impatience. Thus he continued for about 5 weeks till an alteration took place on July 15 [1786] he took leave of his wife and children surrounding his bed. He blessed them as a faithful husband and father and fell asleep in the Lord on July 17th in the morning about 5 o'clock after the blessing of the Lord and of the Congregation had been imparted to him. . . .

4.

[Extracts from Bristol Single Brethren Choir-House Diary⁴¹].
[Br. Parminter's first entry after the departure of Br. Caries,
the previous Single Brothers' labourer]

Tuesday March 4 [1766]. After the Congregation Meeting many benedictory verses were sung for our dear Br. Caries who set off at 7 o'clock for Haverford West loaded with Love and regretted by many. Br. George Steven went to bring back his Horse and 4 S[ingle] Brn. Bore him company as far as the New Passage. While he was going over in the Ferry Boat they stood by themselves on the shore and sung him verses, till they saw him land on the other side.

Monday 10 [March 1766]. Br. Perkins was taken ill last night with a bad surfeit at his stomach and puked and purged all Day. At night he grew very feverish and thos that he should have a Fit of Sickness, but I persuaded him to take a Puke and prepared one for him, which he took, went to Bed and slept and next morning was quite well, for which I was thankful because we hav no Conveniency for sick People.

Wednesday 12 [March 1766]. Br. Perkins came and kept a sinnerlike Band⁴² with me and I coud perceive he had a real mind to be possessed by our Saviour's holy Humanity and Blood. Little Sammy Frip⁴³ having been under Chastisement for little pilfering Tricks by which he had [hurted] the Brethren's Confidence, upon my speaking to him Yesterday, came to me to Day and begged that I and the Brethren woud forgive him. I had a thorow Conversation with him and the poor Child wept heartily and I sympathized with him. At the Evening Blessing I acquainted the Brn. of it and we all forgave him heartily, and he was afterwards full of Love and Joy.

Thursday 13 [March 1766]. Br. Stevens returned from Haverfordwest quite elevated with his happy Journey. He had been at the Communion there seen 6 S[ingle] Brn. and left Br. Carries well.

Friday 14 [March 1766]. Having perceived that Cooking and cleaning

⁴¹ The diary, which in all covers the period 18 January 1763 to 25 April 1767, is in the Bristol Moravian Collection. See the introduction for an account of Andrew Parminter. The single brethren's labourer not only ministered to the spiritual and practical needs of his choir but also acted as an assistant to the minister, preaching to neighbouring congregations, making pastoral calls and taking services when required.

⁴² 'Sinnerlike' was a term of approbation, denoting acknowledgement of one's corrupt and sinful state, a necessary prelude to redemption. A band was a voluntary grouping of a few people (of the same sex), who came together to raise their spiritual awareness.

⁴³ The son of the tallow chandler Samuel Fripp senior, probably the wealthiest and certainly one of the most influential men in the congregation.

the House was a great Hinderance to the Brn. and having been unsuccessful in getting Br. Hague to assist us in it, we had a House Conference at Night to regulate our domestic affairs. The Brn. divided the upper rooms between them I promised to keep them in good order. As to the rest, Br. Perkins proposed to keep the House and Utensils clean and to sweep the sleeping Halls twice and wash them once a week to make the Kitchen Fire take Care of the Labourers Room and all such things for 3d a week from each of the Brethren except the Apprentice Weaver and Sammy Frip and the Brethren were very glad to have it done on those Terms and thus this article was quite agreeably settled. But the Cooking was a more difficult affair and we could only divide the different Branches to it in a more equable manner.

Saturday 15 [March 1766]. I went to Frome to keep the Meetings there.

Monday 16 [March 1766]. Br. Tranneker kept our Choir Meetings and did the Brn. the Pleasure to dine with them.

Monday 17 [March 1766]. I returned from Frome. At the Evening Blessing I perceived that Thomas Grinfield was gloomy and took an opportunity to speak with him; both this Time and last week when he came himself to keep Band with me I found him in a poor situation in his old way and gave him my best Counsel

Tuesday 18 [March 1766]. I went to visit one Joseph Wakefield in the Infirmary who has both his Legs cut off. He thinks of repenting but is unacquainted with our Saviour; I directed him heartily to him.

Thursday 20 [March 1766]. I went again to see Joseph Wakefield and like him better than last time. . . .

Friday 21 [March 1766]. Br. Biggs has twice wrote in a very evangelical mission to a poor Criminal under sentence of Death in Worcester who once lived in a House with him and it seems indeed to have been a real Blessing to him from a Letter he wrote Br. Biggs which he received to Day. He says he had received Forgiveness and is willing to go to our Saviour.

Monday 23 [March 1766]. Our Choir Meeting was tinctured with the blessed Passion Season which commences to Day; I observed it makes a keen Impression on our Brethren. In the Afternoon Br. Perkins came to me and expressed his Longing after the holy Sacrament. As I am but newly acquainted with him I seriously warned him against acting precipitately or heedlessly in this most important matter, but his Testimony of the State of his Heart was really satisfactory. He assured me he had thought well of it and knew what Condemnation it produced to go unworthily to the Lords Supper by going once some years ago in the careless way of others, but at present there was nothing between him and our Saviour for he had forgiven him all his sins and won his whole Heart. Br. Pugh came and read me a Letter he had wrote to a Cousin who is a clergyman and I was pleased with the simple and solid Testimony he lays down of our Saviour. There is something of this kind in these Brethren.

Tuesday [sic] 25 [March 1766]. We partook with the rest of the Congregation of the Grace of this Festival of our Saviour's Incarnation.

Thursday 26 [March 1766]. I spoke with all our House apart and there was a very pretty happy Spirit among them. William Gatehouse desired to go with us to the holy Communion, he is indeed in a pretty way, but yet I must know him better before I can propose him. Thomas Grinfield has had a very blessed week and a new Look from our Saviour and thinks he has given up his whole Heart to him.

Saturday 27 [March 1766]. At our [Elders] Conference finding no reason to delay the Desire of Br. Perkins for the holy Communion I proposed him for a Candidate but it was not to be yet (*).⁴⁴ We partook of the unspeakable Blessings of this day with the Congregation at the Pedilavium⁴⁵ and the holy Communion and were amased at his great Love to poor Sinners.

Good Friday 28 [March 1766]. There has been a particular Spirit attended our Good-Friday Meetings. The Reading the Passion History every Morning since Monday has also been a blessed Matter to us.

Saturday 29 [March 1766]. We were at the great Sabbath L. F. with the Congregation and at 9 o'clock we met in our Sleeping Hall and I spoke to the Brn. what a blessed Matter our Saviour's Corpse and Grave was to us S[ingle] Brn. and then we kneeled down and begged to have the true Experience of it all the Year round sleeping and waking. George Briant was present.

Sunday 30 [March 1766]. We rose brisk and melted a little after 4 o'clock and then went to the Chapel and Burrying Gound at 5 where among the rest we remembered our Br. Becket laid there to rest this Year. The Choir Meetings and Classes with the Children Great Boys and Brn. was truly Festival like . . .

Monday 31 [March 1766]. . . . In the Afternoon one R. Harris an elderly man who had known the Brn many years came and begged to go to the Society L. F. and other Meetings, but I had no Feeling of him and therefore advised him to keep to the Baptists or Methodists whom he has been long with. There is however something in him . . .

Tuesday April 1 [1766]. Br. Traneker and I had a Conference with Br. Waters and Br. Perkins Br. Jones being present to settle Matters concerning the binding Br. Waters son John apprentice to Br. Perkins. He is to be bound for seven years to learn the Gun Lock Smith Trade to live, board and sleep in the Single Brethrens House at his Masters Expence. His Father finds him Cloaths all the Time, but as it does not suit his Father to Pay £10 which was required with him he will find him washing for two years and give Br. Perkins 2s 6d a week till the £10 is paid, or in larger sums if he chuses it. If Br. Perkins leaves the Congregation he forfeits his claim to the Boy's Service from that time. But if the Brethren should call the Master away to any other Place after the Apprentice is declared by Judges to be Master of that business, then

⁴⁴ * denotes the use of a lot in Brethren sources: see introduction for its role. In this case a negative answer was received.

⁴⁵ A footwashing ceremony done in single sex groups.

he is to have [£]1 5 shillings allowance for every Year he remits him of his servitude. A right obliging brotherly spirit prevailed in the affair. His apprenticeship commenced the 1st of May.

Wednesday 2 [April 1766]. Young John Waters came to Br. Perkins on a Months Trial and so long he will live with his Father.

Friday 4 [April 1766]. I finished translating the 1st volume of Br Krantz's Greenland History and now proceed to the 2d this is my Employment.⁴⁶

Saturday 5 [April 1766]. I went to supply Br. Rice's Place at Bath to morrow and returned on

Monday 7th [April 1766]. Meantime br. Tranekier . . . kept the S. Brn's Choir Meetings. At Night after the Meeting we had a lovely little L. F. on occasion of Thomas Grinfield's Birthday yesterday. We were together like a little Family of our Saviour of one Heart and Mind and he in this midst of us as the Band of our Union. We sung him very heartily several verses and he sat weeping.

Tuesday 8 [April 1766]. Peter Rice lately to Bath to see his Father and when I saw him come home I thought that he was oppressed with something and waited for his telling me, but as he did not I took him into my Room to Night and asked him and found it is true, and came to a Resolution not to let him go on such Jaunts without a Brother with him. One must indeed have a strict Eye over him.

Friday 11 [April 1766]. I again called him to me and told him that I observed he had not yet made up his Matters with our Saviour and supposed the sickness he complained of was a sickness of the Mind, he said Yes I added that probably he had not told me all and this was the case and he told me more of his unfaithfulness I can do not other than have Patience with him and pity and pray for him. However I kept Conference with Br. Tranekier about him, who was of my Mind.

Sunday 13 [April 1766]. We had a pretty Class. Thomas Grinfield goes on happily still in his Degree. But talking again with Peter Rice he told me that last week he had resolved to leave the Congregation in Dispair. He gave me such a Description of a convinced but entangled Soul in his own Case as was very affecting. Our Saviour afterwards was pleased to encourage him afresh with a Glance of Grace. ****

Tuesday 15 [April 1766]. Br. Perkin having been discouraged in keeping the House clean partly through some of the Brethrens being a little rough and crooked especially Br. Stevins, and partly because his own Captiousness is not sufficiently mortified I knew no other way but to keep a House Conference, at which I had a painfull sensation of Br. Stevins overbearing Temper and our Saviours spirit had a difficult work to keep the Balance, however after they had spoken freely things were

⁴⁶ David Crantz, *The History of Greenland; containing a description of the country and its inhabitants; and particularly a relation of the mission, carried on these thirty years by the Unitas Fratrum at New Herrnhut and Lichtenfels in that country*, originally published in German in 1765, appeared in 2 volumes in English in 1767, edited and partly translated by John Gambold.

pretty well made up and they all desired Perkins to go on so he reassumed his Post again, as I was glad of. . . . ****

Saturday 26 [April 1766]. The S[ingle] Brn had a Conference after the Singing Hour⁴⁷ the Result of which was that we were very sensible the House must come down though our Saviour had hitherto kept us from Uneasiness about it, neither did the present Purpose arise from us but the Fears of our other Brn and Srs and even Strangers that dreaded the Danger. . . . ****

Monday 28 [April 1766]. The Committee were acquainted with the Design of rebuilding our House and approved of it. The S[ingle] Brn are now quite pleased at the Prospect of having a more commodious Habitation and we see our dear Lord's Hand in the whole and thanks him for it.

Wednesday 30 [April 1766]. The decayed building has begun to be taken down. Br. Pugh has agreed for the Mason's work for 21 Guineas. We arranged ourselves as well as we coud in our contracted Quarters and begged our Saviour to keep us quiet⁴⁸ . . . and happy during this inconvenient time. ****

Monday 5 [May 1766]. Br. Stevins acquainted Br. Traneker this morning of his going to a Fair, but Br. Traneker thought it was not proper for S[ingle] Brn, but Br. Web should rather go to the Fairs, however this time he went.

Monday 12 [May 1766]. Our Dining is one of the Things that pained me of late, one sits in one Corner of the Room eating Bread and Chesse another with a Beer Soop another with a couple of Eggs and it is as if we did not belong together, but when we came to talk it over at Night I found they were tired of it as well as me and tho before one thought it too dear another too troublesome yet now they were all willing to live like Brethren. . . . ****

Saturday 17 [May 1766]. I was quite driven to Day from my writing Table for the carpenters and masons came and took out 2 of the 4 Parlour windows, our only sitting Room and made a Cloud of Dust; they were placed in the new Sleeping Hall.

Sunday 18 [May 1766]. . . . a blessed Spirit prevailed in the Chapel and we had a new grateful Feeling of our dear Mother's faithful call⁴⁹ and wished to be better Children.

Thursday 29 [May 1766]. We were in a sad Pickle in our House for just as they had uncovered part of the Roof to alter it came a hard settled Rain and drove the Carpenters off so that it ran down in a stream into the House, however on. . . .

31 Saturday [May 1766]. Both the old and new Part was all covered with Tyles. It hath been but a month and one day from its being begun to be pulled down to its being rebuilt and covered. ***

⁴⁷ A hymn service.

⁴⁸ I.e. spiritually calm.

⁴⁹ There are a number of references to the Holy Ghost as female or to the female aspects of God in the Bristol sources before the 1780s.

Friday 6 [June 1766]. At the Labourers Conference I proposed Br. Webb's going to Fair altogether with Br. Traneker afterwards proposed and he was willing and so Br. Stevins is exempted. Also about Sammy Frip's odd way of Life, eating his victuals always in the School by himself⁵⁰ but nothing coud be done herein for the present, though Expedientcs were proposed. Now the Masons have finished what they have to do to the new House and are gone.

Friday 13 [June 1766]. We had many of our windows stopped up so that we have 13 less than we had reckoning these that are less in the new Building than the old, and yet the new Tax is so high that we shall have more to pay than we had before. ****

Monday 23 [June 1766]. This being the Anniversary of consecrating the Chappel in Kingswood it was a great Day there and among the rest 3 of my Brn and I went there. We had the Pleasure of wellcoming Br. and Sr. Bohler there and he kept some blessed meetings. My Sr. Hurlock came with them on a visit. ****

Tuesday 1 [July 1766]. All the Labourers here and the neighbouring Places had a long important Conference.

Wednesday 2 [June 1766]. Br. and Sr. Bohler etc. breakfasted and dined in our House. ****

Friday 11 [July 1766]. Br. Carries returned [from Tetherton]. He had been remarkably guarded by the ministering Angels in a Fall of his Horse, his Spur catching in the Saddle Cloth confined his Foot to the Stirrup, and the Horse rising he hung with his Foot up and his Head down, his Head was cut and bled excessively but a kind Angel held the Horse by the Bridle so that it stood quite still and looked back at him; some People in a House adjacent heard him cry and released him, he washed the wound with Vinegar and all was well very soon. ****

Tuesday 15 [July 1766]. At night we kept a little Love Feast in our House in thankful Remembrance of our dear Lord's Benediction in the Building and repairing the. . . House [which] is now finished and all the workmen gone. We talked of the whole affair with a truly grateful Impression, how seasonally the dear Father of our House threw Br. Becket's £100 into our Hand and how he has blest it like the widow's oil, for it has built us a fine new Sleeping Hall, Kitchen, Pantry and coal House instead of the old useless dangerous Ruins, it has fitted up an old wet Lumber Room for a pretty dwelling Room new roofed it and made a Chimney in it, white washed painted and pointed our old House all over within and without, stopped up many needless windows made many Closets, a fine new sink, Struts all round the House, a walled Ditch in Br. [illegible]'s Garden to keep the walls dry, repaired and white washed Br. Sims School, walled up Br. Perkin's [gunsmith] Shop, and numberless other little matters so that every body thought us quite lavish in Improvements and yet to their Amusement we had £10 over to buy a Jack, Grates, Chairs, Tables, an archive and Scritore for the Labourer's Room and every kind of Furniture we stood in need of, tis

⁵⁰ Brother Sims had a small school for boys on the chapel premises.

true in this latter affair were favoured with some Presents quite unthought of in Money and Things, so that we may now truly say that the S[ingle] Brn. have a very agreeable commodious well situated Choir House and are in all respects set up for the Reception of 20 Brethren. The Workmen were well preserved from Harm, have behaved well, loved to work for us and are gone away with a good Impression in their Hearts and a good Report of us upon their Lips, nay two of them have come several times to the Preaching and not without being touched, and finally the whole hath been finished expeditiously in 10 weeks time. . . .

Friday 18 [July 1766]. Br. and Sr. Sherrif's little 7 Months Infant . . . was baptised and called John. Peter Rice long a poor object of mere Forbearance has fallen into fleshly sins, had his Bed removed out of the S[ingle] Brn's sleeping Hall and was forbid the Congregation Meeting.

Monday 21 [July 1766]. We were obliged to dismiss Peter Rice from our House, and send him to his Father at Bath. He weeps incessantly at his Misery and I pitied him from my Heart, but alas they are not the Tears of a broken Sinner touched by the Wounds of Jesus.

Wednesday 23 [July 1766]. The S[ingle] Br. Rees came to Day from Haverfordwest to the approaching Fair. At our Evening Blessing I spoke to the Brn. about the Fair and entreated them to keep close to our Saviour in this Time of universal Dissipation and Hurry. I never go near it without Necessity. . . .

Friday 25 [July 1766]. The busy Fair began. Br. Perkin and I went and bought many Things for our House.

Saturday 26 [July 1766]. I went to keep the Meetings at Bath as Br. Rice went to Fulneck to the Provincial Synod last Thursday. He took his son Joseph to the Oeconomy⁵¹. . . . Br. Pugh hath brought a Great Boy William Evenis to be apprentice with Br. Briant, but there is but little Hopes of his prospering there whose two of our Brn's Children are already turned and come not near us. There is one besides out of the World. I had a very awful stricking Conversation with those 4 Boys on Sunday Night it made them and me tremble. I appealed to their Consciences if there was any other Saviour but Jesus Christ, they said no. Then I asked them how it was possible for them to turn Enemies to that Saviour who must save their Souls. Golden was touched but Stone was like a Rock. ****

Saturday 2 [August 1766]. Br. Perkin told me that our Saviour had paid him a particular visit of Grace lately. One Day I got him to give me an Account of all he owed in the World. He fancied he had run more behind since he came to live in this House, tho' if the fitting up the Shop etc. is considered then the contrary is true, however it made him

⁵¹ An Oeconomy meant a communal settlement, such as those at Herrnhut or Fulneck in Yorkshire, but also, more specifically, the schools set up for the children of congregational members, which themselves had a vocational element and strove to be self-supporting.

very heavy that he someway owed more. At Night he walked in the Garden bewailing to our Saviour what a wretched Creature he had been his whole Life, but at last he thought why do I confuse myself is there not a Saviour? I will commit it all to him and in this Disposition our Saviour manifested himself to his Heart so clear as if he had seen him with his bodily Eyes. He was so overpowered with it that he really thought he should have gone to him upon the spot. Since then he hath been very happy. I mention it so large because these are the weightiest of all Things to me. ****

Monday 11 [August 1766]. George Briant came to live at Bristol and got work with Br. Frip. He had been so disorderly and immoral that his Father cannot keep him any longer. He came as usual to us but I coud not think of letting him come to our House and therefore after some very serious Discourse I dismissed him with these Words, that one that would go on in unfaithfullness to our Saviour should not come within our Doors, but whenever it was his sincere Desire and intention to be our Saviour's he should be wellcome to us again. ****

Thursday 16 [August 1766]. To Day I finished the long work of translating and revising the Greenland History. In the Afternoon I went to Bath to be there to Morrow. ****

Thursday 23 [August 1766]. The Youth Samuel Jones has been ill for some time in a Consumption. When I visited him in the Beginning of his Disorder I found him relying on our Saviour and willing to go to him and whenever I visited him I found him the same. About a Fornight ago the Doctor said that nothing would relieve him except change of air . . . , therefore his Father took him to some Relations in Gloucester. His abode there was a Blessing to the House, but he grew worse in Health. Yesterday he returned. When Br. Traneker and I went to see him his happy Look and confident Heart towards our Saviour so struck us that we could do not other than think of his Reception in to the Congregation on his sick[bed], as all his Relations belong to us and his Mother lies in our Burying Ground. There could be no Delay because there was some Appearance of a Mortification in his Legs, therefore we called a Conference and proposed this soul to our Saviour for Reception and he gave his gracious Yes to it.⁵² Accordingly after Dinner Br. Traneker and I and a couple of S[ingle] Brn went to Br. Andras['s house] where he lay and after an affecting address he was received into the Congregation and Br. Traneker prayed tenderly over him. His old Father stood there bathed in Tears. Then I set out directly for Bath as Br. and Sr. Rice are not yet come home.

Monday 25 [August 1766]. I returned from Bath. I kept a Band with Peter Rice as I have done every time I have been there. He wept as if he would break his Heart and yet the broken Heart and the application to the wounds of Jesus is wanting. Our Saviour has endorsed another Trial to be made with him in Fulneck, I wish it might be soon. This Afternoon after my Return I went to see Sammy Jones and Br. Nyberg came there

⁵² I.e. the elders met and drew lots on the question.

too. They told us his old acquaintance Br. Jones apprentices wanted to see him, so we sent for them now. John Stillman his fellow apprentice who formerly was in the Society being present as well as Br. Jones Apprentices. Br. Nyberg and I and Sammy had a long close Conversation with them that was enough to melt a Heart of Stone, and I really hope something will begin afresh among these poor young People on this occasion. . . . ****

Thursday 28 [August 1766]. One Mr. Peters a Presbyterian Minister of Newport paid Br. Traneker a visit and then me. He wanted to know why I left their Religion and I told him, which gave me a fine opportunity to testify of our Saviour. He stayed a great while with me and the Tears often came in his Eyes. . . .

Friday 29 [August 1766]. . . . [In the evening] Br. Perkins came running hither from Br. Andras with the news that our Saviour had made a happy Close to our Festival⁵³ by taking home Samuel Jones in a happy Manner to himself. Br. Perkins had a particular Impulse to go to see him after the Society Meeting and when he came he found him just going but still he retained his senses and speech. Br. Perkins sung some verses and afterwards he said: Sing one more and I shall go. Then he sung: When he shall gain Permission to leave this mortal Tent. Thyself just then present etc. When he had done, Samuel said: My dear Lamb! My dear Lamb! and then expired with the words upon his Lips. This gave us all such Joy that the Brn. coud not help going and telling some that were gone to sleep of it directly. Thus he went on his [nineteenth] birthday.

*Samuel Jones*⁵⁴ was born in Bristol August 29 1747 and baptised by a dissenting Minister to whom his Father belonged. While he was a little Child his Parents joined the Brethren and took him with them to the Meetings. He was a child of a close Turn of Mind, yet he had a tender Heart and was kept from the Evil of the World. But as he grew up he grew more stubborn loved Company and gave his Parents some Pain. In 1758 he had a niece that went happily to our Saviour, this bro[u]ght him upon his Heart and a bad sickness following he was very tender. When he recovered he was bound apprentice to his Br. and Sr. Andras and went on pretty well for some time, but after a while he was drawn aside by his fellow apprentices and gave his Friend much Trouble. Yet even then our Saviour often drew near his Heart. A little before Easter he fell into a Consumption . . . He was awhile in the Hospital and the swelling in his Legs was abated but the Disorder in his Breast remained. At last the Doctor advised Change of Air as the last Resort. and he went with his Father to some kindred in Gloucester. There he grew much worse and now believed there was no Recovery. This was properly the time when he turned in good Earnest to our Saviour and soon found a true Friend in him and longed to go to him. . . . His Relations and two Apprentices in the House where he was were much struck at his

⁵³ Each Choir had its own annual day when they held special services rededicating themselves to God and also a Love Feast.

⁵⁴ A memoir apparently written by Parminter and incorporated within the diary.

rejoicing in the Prospect of his Dissolution and . . . at his being so calm and happy in so much Pain and the two young Men had a great Love for him and took every Leisure Minute to be with him. . . . John Stillman one of his fellow Apprentices was very much affected with what Sammy said to him and got such a Love for him that he did not care to leave him Day nor Night. He [Sammy] told that young Creature [John] of the Danger of his ways begged him not to mind the Reproach of his Companions, but says he I beg thee John look back to our Dear Saviour and entreat him to have Mercy on thee, to forgive thee thy sins and to wash thee in his Blood, and then you will be a happy Creature and come after me to our Saviour and I shall be glad to see thee there. Our Saviour will also help thee in thy Business and all will go well. There were also some other unfaithful Youths who came to see him, and what past may perhaps leave a lasting Impression on that class of Youths. . . . his soul flew out to the Lamb along with the last words exactly 19 years old to Day.

Sunday 31 [August 1766]. After the Congregation Days Love Feast and Vestry almost all the Congregation went to Br. Andras and from thence attended the Corpse of Samuel Jones to the Burying Ground making a very striking venerable Procession the Length of a long Street in the most decent order and when we came to the Chapel I kept a Discourse on the doctrinal Text of Friday when he went home . . . and made use of the new Liturgy which Br. Traneker had composed out of the Scriptures and it was attended with a fine Feeling. Many Strangers came so that the Burrying Ground was thick lined all round, yet tho it was so numerous all was very orderly. ****

Tuesday 9 [September 1766]. Br. Traneker kept a blessed Congregation on the Doctrinal Texts of the Brn. and Srs. exhorting the Brn. to pray always that is to keep up a constant Conversation of the Heart with our Saviour and this woud cast all immoderate Passions which the Brn. are warned against because they are more addicted to them than the female Sex. They are more vain and therefore are cautioned against gay apparel etc. At our Evening Blessing I told our Brn. that I thought in the Congregation the Brn. had almost more need of the warning against gay apparel than the Srs. for the Srs. in general wore a uniform plain Dress, but the Brn might sooner break Bounds. I gave them a Caution against it as one way of making Provision for the Flesh and conforming to the World. I have wished for such an occasion of expressing my Thoughts and hope to see its Effects. ****

Friday 12 [September 1766]. There has been an Alternation in John Stillman ever since Samuel Jones sickness and going home. He was so ill behaved before that his Master woud have dismissed him if he coud but he got something from Sammy and did not care to leave him Day nor Night. Since he went home he wrote down a great deal of what Sammy said to him and I inserted Part of it in his Course of Life. He has since forsaken his bad Company and wants to come among us and I have To Day given him leave. . . . ****

Monday 15 [September 1766]. In the Evening Br. A. Jones brought

George and James Stone to me and recommended them to my acquaintance they being desirous of returning again to our Saviour and the Brn and by Br. Traneker's approvation I gave them leave to come to our House. I believe it goes but a little way at present, but hope it may go further.

Friday 19 [September 1766]. Br. Pugh was very sick all Night in a kind of Cholic so that sometimes it seemed almost as if he coud not live and we got but little Rest. But today he got better again; yet he has had but poor Health for some time. Mr. Grigg breakfasted with me and wanted us to take his late wife's nephew young Lawrence [now] in the S[ingle] Brn's House in Bedford to be an apprentice to Br. Perkin, who had nothing against it. I consulted with Br. Traneker and we agreed to ask our Saviour but it was no*.

Monday 21 [September 1766]. The Childrens Class in our House increases there came 9 to day which is more than ever I had before. . . .

Monday 22 [September 1766] It came into some of our minds to Day whether we might not begin an Ironmonger's Shop under the management of Br. Pugh, [with] Biggs as Shopman and Perkins as workman and it had such a promising aspect that I coud not help mentioning it to Br. Traneker and he seemed to have nothing against it if we can raise money and if our Saviour gives his Yes to it. ****

Friday 23 [September 1766]. . . . we think to move into the Sleeping Hall on Br. Johannes Birthday. ***

Friday 26 [September 1766]. Br. Perkin has been very happy of late, but to Day methought I perceived little wings growing to fly instead of creeping as a poor Sinner. I discovered my suspicion to him and warned him against fine Dreams and desired him to keep low as a Sinner at our Saviour's Feet.

Sunday 28 [September 1766]. I spoke seperately with three or four of my Brn to Day to the Purpose, especially William Gatehouse who wants to go to the Communion, but having heard that his Behaviour in his Masters Shop is not priestly enough for a Br. I told him of it. He wept much and told me he woud give his whole Heart to our dear Saviour. . . .

Monday 29 [September 1766]. The great Boy Joseph Jones a poor Lad that hath a Mind for the World . . . lately ran away from his Master soon after his Return he fell sick of a Fever I went and saw him to Day and he wept over his unfaithfulness and I could direct him to our Saviour with great Freedom and Feeling. It is as if our Saviour woud call back most of those poor stray Sheep among the Youths and great Boys.

Tuesday 30 [September 1766]. I took a walk to Bath to see two of my own Sisters there and returned next Day.

Thursday 2 [October 1766]. I went again to see sick Joseph Jones and had a pretty Feeling and on Saturday when I went to see him in the Infirmary he wept and told me our Saviour was near his Heart. I believe his sickness will be a Blessing to him.

Saturday 11 [October 1766]. I returned home [after four days in Salisbury] and found all the Brethren cheerful but Thomas Grinfield. One always sees in his Countenance when he is unhappy . . .

Sunday 12 [October 1766]. There came 12 Children to their Class to Day. The Great Boys Class was very moving. . . . At night we enjoyed the highest good with the Congregation and it was a very particular time to my own Heart. But alas after I came home Thomas Grinfield came to me in great Misery and told me some things which might really have been his Ruin. I spoke to him and he cried aloud more than once. I shall never forget his Distress. I hope it will be an eternal warning to him. ****

Friday 17 [October 1766]. . . . To Day we pulled our Beds to Pieces and rubbed all the Joints with sweet Oil to kill the Bugs, for we are unhappily infested with them.

Saturday Oct. 18 [1766]. Our Choir having had a Love Feast in the morning with the Congregation . . . we brought our Beds into the New Sleeping [Hall] which held 9 in a Row conveniently and woud have held all our 10 Beds in one Row if some of them had not been out of size . . . We are 10 Brn and Boys that move into the Sleeping Hall. After the L. F. I kept a Discourse to the Brn. on the Watch Word. We supped Happily together and between 9 and 10 went up into the Sleeping Hall and placed ourselves every one at the Foot of his Bed and after singing some Verses we kneeled down and implored our Saviour to fill this Place with his Presence, to bedew it with his Blood and to bless his Single Brethren in their Sleep therein and then we laid ourselves down with a deep Impression of his Corpses Nearness.

Wednesday 22 [October 1766]. When I came home [from a day's preaching at Whitley] I found Peter Rice here who has got Permission to go to the Choir House at Fulneck which I was very glad of for he was in wretched circumstances at Bath. He goes very willingly.

Thursday 23 [October 1766]. He [Rice] set off for Fulneck and Br. Perkin went 7 miles to bring him in the way. Peter was affected with the Love of the Brn.

Sunday 26 [October 1766]. . . . Br Biggs told me that he was now got clear of all Debts which was a Joy to us both. . . .

Tuesday 28 [October 1766]. Br Walters visited a young single Negroe who is sick and found a real Feeling of our Saviour and his Sufferings and he had no Doubt but our Saviour would receive him when he left the world. I had a pretty Band with Sammy Frip to Day and coud feel that our Saviour hath his Eye upon that poor Child. Thomas Grinfield came and told me that our Saviour had been inexpressibly near to him this Evening and this was the first time he hath been rightly comforted since his late unfaithfulness. ****

Wednesday 5 [November 1766]. I went to seen the poor sick Negro but he was got down by the Kitchen Fire and there being a Heap of Servants about he told Br. Walters the less said about our Saviour there the better therefore we soon walked home again. Yet I really liked the young Man. He lives at the Fish Ponds. Two of my own Sisters have been in Town since Thursday last at Mr. Clayfields⁵⁵ whose wife is a Relation of ours.

⁵⁵ Michael Clayfield, a distiller, proved an important sceptical influence on Thomas Chatterton in 1769–70.

When I was with them to Day I told them about the work of our Saviour among the Greenlanders and had an opportunity to preach the Gospel to them. But I have not seen clearer a great while the present Profisincy of the World in Scepticism than I did to Night in Mr. Clayfield. However I made a very serious appeal to his Heart ... and had the Comfort to find that the Power of the Gospel is greatly triumphant over the weak subterfuges of Unbelief, though the Effect was not as I wished.

Saturday 6 [November 1766]. Mr. Wilson of Bath came with Br. Traneker to see me, he has spent a Fortnight with Mr. Howel Harris.⁵⁶

Tuesday 11 [November 1766]. . . . At Night Br. Perkin came to me and we had a long Conversation about the Gunlock Trade. Their Orders increase very much and as far as I see it is a pretty safe Branch that brings them in 2 pence in the Shilling and upwards. ****

Friday 14 [November 1766]. . . . [After the Discourse at the Meeting tonight], William Gatehouse came in smiling to me to let me know that he also was now got clear of Debts. I cant but be thankful that amidst these dear times for Provisions when there has been Mobs all over the Kingdom on account of their Exorbitance, and also amidst the extraordinary Expences our Brn have been at in fitting up our House and their Rooms etc. yet we not only come well through but a couple of Brn who have been some years cumbered with Debts have paid them off. Br. Perkin is now the only one behind hand, for I can scarce reckon Thomas Grimshaws as he has £2 and coming in to his Board free except Sundays. Br. Biggs came to me and showed an Inclination to drop Mr. Lydiard's service as Mr. White encreases his allowance to 6 Guineas per annum and Br. Pugh the mason has asked him to keep his Books and he will take the cleaning our House which will be 18 pence a week and I believe it will be the best way. ****

Tuesday 25 [November 1766]. Br. Traneker has kept many very singular Discourses of late and that to the Congregation to Night was one on the Text: Confess your Sins one to the other . . . He set this in such a striking Light that left no Veil nor no Peace to Hipocrisy and yet it was so alluring and evangelical that it must have looked on by every poor sinner not as a painful Task but as a blessed Priviledge, and the Fruits of it appeared this very Evening in our House, for Thomas Grinfield came and told me an unhappy thing he had been entangled with for years and never spoke of before. And Br. Biggs wrote me a Letter which he gave me next Morning, which when we came to talk together produced so many Tears as I never saw in him before.

Wednesday 26 [November 1766]. I went to the Sale of Br. Weaver's things to try to get for our John Weavers his Father's Picture. Most People pity him because tis to pay a Debt his wife was bound for before their marriage.

Friday 28 [November 1766]. Br. Pugh was ill again to Night with

⁵⁶ The leading Welsh evangelist, who was closely involved with the Moravians at Haverfordwest and enjoyed cordial relations with them during his frequent visits to Bristol.

Stiches in his Side, which made him cry out, and kept me awake, but to Day he was bled and grew better. At night we had the Pleasure of wellcoming our dear Br. Abraham here and he kept a blessed Society Meeting.

Sunday 30 (November 1766). I went to Kingswood to keep the Meetings I had also a Class with the Boys. Br. Abraham saw the 3 Classes of Children Boys and S[ingle] Brn. and kept them distinct Meetings. The Brn. told me that in their meeting and class there was scarce one dry Eye. He preached with great Energy and had a crowded Chapel as it always is on a Sunday.

Monday 1 [December 1766]. James Taylor came to Day to our House and I introduced him to Br. Abraham who had a long Band with him and he told him had taken a new Resolution to be our Saviour's. O that it may but be sinnerlike and true.

Tuesday 2 [December 1766]. Before Dinner Br. Abraham and I went to Kingswood and staid there till the Evening. We kept a Class with the Boys great and small and spoke heartily and tenderly to each one and to them all. He compared them to a class of country Yorkshire Boys. James Taylor came again to our House. I asked Br. Abraham whether I should aske him to come to our LF on Friday and he said Yes! However I first took him [Taylor] aside and asked him whether it was his real Mind as a poor Sinner to obtain Grace from our Saviour and be his entirely and he said it was, I then cautioned him against such shameful iresolution and unfaithfulness as the 2 Stones had lately showed and invited him to our LF and he thanked me, but I could see but little of a broken Sinner in him.

Wednesday 3 [December 1766]. I talked over my Proposals to Br. Abraham about the Ironmongers Business and about Br. Stevens.

Thursday 4 [December 1766]. Br. Abraham and I went and visited several of our People as we did at other Times

5 [December] 1766 Monday. At our Labourers Conference in the Afternoon we talked over my Proposal of beginning something for our Oeconomy in the Ironmongers way. A shop was not that adviseable but if we began any thing to do it in a few Articles as might answer and to deal very cautiously. Br. Abraham will first propose it to the Oeconomate's⁵⁷ Conference in London and write us the Result. At 6 Br. Traneker and Pyrleus⁵⁸ came to our House and we had a LF with our S[ingle] Brn. and Great Boys there were 18 present besides 2 were sick and one hindered. We had a very hearty happy Love Feast with our dear Br Abraham who expressed his Pleasure and Joy over this little gathering for our Saviour and gave them his best advice. He and Br. Traneker also spoke to them Class-wise and finally when the Things were removed he kept us a blessed Discourse on the W.W. Noah builded an Alter unto the Lord. It has indeed been a happy Evening for our

⁵⁷ A superintendant of an oeconomy.

⁵⁸ Johann Christopher Pyrlaeus served in Kingswood and Bristol from 1766 as a deacon or assistant labourer before going elsewhere in 1770.

House and Choir. After the Meeting in the Chappel Br. Abraham kept a House Conference about our outward matters when Br. Stevens spoke about the aforesaid Proposals of his beginning to comb [wool-comb] in our House. Also about Br Perkins and Pughs little Gun Lock Trade. Afterward Br Pugh stayed and I had the Pleasure to find he was very willing to give over what they had begun for the Good of the House. Next Day he spoke with Br Perkin alone, upon the same Head, Br Pugh was cautious but Perkin was pretty certain something might be done for the good of the House, and is very willing to do his best in it. Thus we have thoroughly examined into this affair and I have left it entirely to Br. Abraham's and the Oeconomate's Conference whether and which way it shall be begun. In the Evening I kept a Band with Br. Abraham about myself and my office. ****

Monday 8 [December 1766]. The Internment of Br. Cheyne⁵⁹ from Bath brought a young Man from thence to see us; who the Moment I came to him very frankly told me he wanted to be our Saviour's entirely and begged we would remember him before our Saviour though he was very unworthy of our notice. This visit was a Blessing to him and he told our People afterwards in Bath that he should be glad to live with us if he coud bring himself through. His Name is Thomas Dibbins a Plasterer and Tyler. Then came a large Procession with the Remains of our Br. Cheyne, gathering as it came till the Chappel was crowded perhaps near 1000 People and thus this Brs Relics were at last deposited in the Congregation's Burying ground. He had resisted his Call to the Congregation till he lay on his sick Bed but then desired it and it was granted by our Saviour and done with such a Feeling as gave us all much Joy. It was made a particular stir in Bath. At our Evening Blessing Br. Abraham kept a farewell discourse to the Brn. and afterwards saw them in Classes and kept a kind of Love Feast with the Comb[ined] class. ****

Wednesday 10 [December 1766]. I went to the Pottery in Breadstreet to buy a salting Pan and as Br. Biggs was at the New Repository I called on him and found a Friendship from 2 Men and a Woman that I did not expect, I could see his being there is not without a Blessing. One of them is a young Man that comes sometimes to our House, and to the meetings so does the woman to the latter. Last Sunday young John Gready told me he should be glad to have some Employment among the Brn., I spoke to Br. Abraham about it who had spoken thorowly with him and told me he thought him to be either a very promising Boy or a great Hipocrite and as we both hoped the former though he is not in the Society we thought it might be well to see among our Brn. I spoke with Br. Traneker about it and mentioned Pughs and he had nothing against it, nor Br. Pugh, the mason, but when I came to speak to his Father this Evening he told me that he had not strength enough for a Mason and so it drops.

⁵⁹ A prominent local physician and husband of an active congregation member.

Saturday 11 [December 1766]. In the afternoon I visited Mr. Fry⁶⁰ but he soon went into the Country and so I drank Tea with Thomas Grinfield and Robert Fry and told him a good deal about the Conversion of the Greenlanders Indians and I also recommended Br. Biggs to him as a Book-Keeper to any shop that he knew wanted such a Person and was pleased with my visit. ****

Tuesday 23 [December 1766]. Sammy Fripp hath lately begun to learn on the Harpsicord by his Father's Desire from a worldly Master one Mr. Combe,⁶¹ tis surprizing what Dangers this exposes him to, I am forced to watch over every Step. After the Congregation Meeting Br. Sherriff ran into us to tell us his little son John was just going home [i.e. dying], Br. Traneker desired me to go and I went and thought every Breath woud be his last therefore I sung a verse or two and blest him for his Departure, he looked as composed and happy as if nothing ailed him; while we sung some more verses with a delightful Feeling he revived a little again and did not close his languishing Life till the next Evening. ****

Thursday 25 [December 1766]. This was Christmas Day and the Meetings and Classes in our House were delightful. In the afternoon the youth Samuel Mynard came to me and begged to be received into the Society. He has come to the Meetings in our House ever since I came here and not without a Blessing, but having a shy dark Look, I had no great mind to take him into the Society and even now did not promise him, but when I spoke with our Brn. I found they all loved him and Br. Traneker being also for it I resolved to grant him this Favour next Sunday. While we were together to Day after the Preaching Br. Jones brought in a young Black to us who has come constantly to the Preaching a good while and sometimes bring another with him. I could not perceive much in him yet but a little good will. The other young Negro we went to see and who had really a Love for our Saviour is gone out of Time,⁶² and I believe indeed our Saviour took him and that very opportunely for his Mistress dying had bequeathed him to a wild young officer. ****

Monday 5 [January 1767]. I received a Couple of Letters from Br. Abraham. He acquaints me that the Oeconomates Conference had taken into Consideration our begining something in the Iron-Mongers Way and spread it before our Saviour, but he had given his negative to it * and so it drops but this does not affect Br. Pugh and Perkins little traffic in the Gunlock way, which they may and will still prosecute. ****

Friday 16 [January 1767]. Before the meeting John Stockdale came to me in great Distress because his Father had rashly beaten him and thrown burning coals at him. I could not find the youth had given him

⁶⁰ Samuel Fripp senior had business connections with the various Quaker members of the Fry family in Bristol.

⁶¹ George Combe or Combes was Cathedral organist 1756–9 and 1765–9.

⁶² This expression may refer to the ending of a period of indentured service (as it does in the entry for 19 February 1767) but here the phrase 'our Saviour took him' might imply that he had died.

any occasion. I desired him to fly to our Saviour in all Circumstances and go home and be subject to his Father as our Saviour was.

Sunday 18 [January 1767]. This being the Anniversary of entering into our Choir House 4 Years ago we had a Breakfast LF, at which Br. Traneker favoured us with his Company. Four Brn. besides Br. Caries Biggs Pugh and Stevins were now present, but Griffith who was the 4th is gone into the World and married about this Time. There are now 8 Brsn. and 2 Boys and our Saviour has since established This Choir to his Praise. We were very sensible of his Mercy to us and therefore at our Choir-Meeting the pretty W.W.: His Mercyful-Kindness is great towards us... was very agreeable to us and considered of with a blessed Feeling. Then those that live in the House staid and we kneeled down, and thanked our dear Lord for his endless Mercy, begged the Continuance of it and devoted ourselves to him a new while the Tears ran down from mine and the Brethrens and even the 2 Boys Eyes. At the Conference of the Parents to Day, I spoke a word, which brought me under a little Displeasure of those that have little Boys. The Case was this. Some of the Parents desired me to let their little Boys come to our House on a Sunday afternoon, but at length the rest took the Liberty to send theirs too, so that our Kitchen was full of little Boys on a Sunday, and there is no Room for a Stranger to sit down, and besides there is no right Inspection over them and one of our Brn. is obligd to stay at home from the Meeting. We have besides 9 great Boys most Part of the Day in our House. Therefore I said I thought we could not well let it go on so any longer. This they took unkind and said what shall we do with our children when we are at a Meeting. I afterwards advised them to let them be in Br. Sims' School, but that had objections. In short they finally came to the Resolution to let them be in Br. Rossiters' Kitchen and let one of the married Brn. in Turns have the Inspection over them. To Day Br. Biggs entered upon his office as House Servant. He is come away from Mr. Lydiard's and will have £20 a year certain for keeping some books which will not take up half his Time and what he will get as House Servant and from the Lawyers will exceed his former salary besides being at his Liberty, having much more time and being of such great Service in our House. I cannot be thankful enough to our Saviour that has thus charmingly helped us among ourselves to one that will keep the House clean and which we so much wanted and could see no way to help ourselves in, only by constraining Br Perkin and John Walters to do it to their Loss. ****

Wednesday 11 [February 1767]. I was to Day to see Sr Stone⁶³ she is far gone in a Consumption but as happy as an Angel. If any sceptic woud be convinced of the Reality of our Saviour's manifesting himself to a poor Sinner let him go there. She has lately commenced poetess and her verses are more Heart, and made me ashamed of my dim Poesy. After I left her I coud not help weeping at our Saviour's feet good part of the way home. Sammy Frip having a bad sore and swelling in his Passage

⁶³ Anna Stone, John Cennick's sister.

was obliged to come under the surgeon's Hands and therefore went home to his Father. I have lately been seriously negotiating with his Father to let him enter into a more human way of Life and not let him live like a Recluse or a Prisoner and he has at last resolved to alter it with Br Traneker's joint-advice, and this Circumstance of his sickness comes just apropos to introduce it to Br Sims. ****

Thursday 19 [February 1767]. Mr. Wilson of Bath paid me a visit. John Weaver who before slept in our House, being now out of his Time came also to board in our House. His Master gives him 18s a week which is a fine thing for a young Beginner, and if he goes right he will be a great Help to this little oeconomy.

Saturday 21 [February 1767]. Br. Traneker went to Frome and left me here to keep the meetings to morrow.

Sunday 22 [February 1767] Young Gread having played lightminded Tricks and offended the rest I dismissed him our House, the matter was of no great Consequence and when the poor boy wept and told me he wished I would not turn him away, he woud beg our Saviour to give him Grace I coud not help pitying him yet advised him to seek forgiveness of our Saviour and when he had given him his whole Heart and had done wearing two Faces one in the House and the other out of it he should come again, for he is inclined to Hipocrisy and yet Levity – This affair furnished some serious matter for the Great Boys class. I had a pretty Meeting with the Brn. on the Beauty of Holiness which the W.W. speaks of.

Monday 23 [February 1767]. Br. Traneker returned from Frome. I got Letters from Brn. Johannes and Br. Abraham with a Call from hence to Haverfordwest and Br. Volkel is to come in my Place, Br. Carries goes to Duckinfield Br. Shaukirk to Bedford Br. B[. . .]shaw [illegible] to Barbadoes and a german Br. unnamed comes to Okbrook from Zeist. Thus our Saviour has made a pretty general translocation among that Brn. and I hope it will be attended with a new Blessing.⁶⁴ In the afternoon I had the Favour to be at a LF in the S[single] Srs. House which they made chiefly to impress their gratitude to their good Benefactress Sr. Barlow now going to Fulneck which they did in a long tender Hymn very beautifully.

Tuesday 24 [February 1767]. Mr. Grigg made a hearty visit. After the meeting William Gatehouse came to keep Band with me with a feeling of his Misery. We had a long and very cordial anointed Interview, and though I sympathised with his Pain, yet I rejoiced that the H[oly] Ghost breaks up the fallow Ground. Before I went to Bed while smoaking my pipe in the Kitchen with 3 Brn. we had some heavenly Conversation together and went to Bed with our Hearts quite warm. ****

Monday 2 [March 1767]. In the morning George Briant came to me all in Tears. He is turned away from Br. Frip's and knows not where to put his Head. He spoke to me with numberless Tears and the most

⁶⁴ The Church Unity called on ministers, deacons and deaconesses to move periodically. The Choir House diary was not kept up for long after Parminter's removal.

lamentable sabbings, owning his Sins very frankly, looking upon himself as an undone Creature and entreating us to have mercy on him as he had no Creature to fly to but our Saviour and the Brn. 'I know says he I am not worthy to put my Foot in this House, yet I am sure I shall perish if I stay in the World nay even if I go to my Fathers, I entreat you make a new Trial with me for I want to be our Saviour's entirely and I really belief if you will take me in I shall; all the while he was bathed in Tears.' I confess I was quite at a Loss, on the one Hand I knew his Course had been bad, his Heart dead, and repeated Trials had been attended with nothing but Trouble and Grief nor did I see any way how he coud come through; yet on the other Hand his Tears Entreaties and Promises pierced my very Heart, for unaffected Tears from poor George was a new Phenomenon, I coud also see that there was something in it from our Saviour and his Soul was precious to me. In this Dilemma I begged our Saviour to direct me and if his Time of Grace was come for this poor Creature that he woud not suffer us to frustrate it, or if it was only superficial Tears that he might not deceive and perplex us. At last in my Perplexity I went for advice to my faithful Br. Traneker and told him the Case just as it was and he promised to come to me to morrow and consider about it.

Tuesday 3 [March 1767]. Accordingly in the Forenoon Br. Traneker came and upon mature Deliberation we resolved to spread George Briants Case before our Saviour We made 3 * [lots] – [1] that our Saviour approves of making a Trial with George Briant in the Single Brn House [2]- It is better not to venture and [3] a Blank, and the first was given us. Accordingly Br. Traneker will talk with his Father to Day at Bath. We called in George and he was exceeding glad to have another Door of Grace opened to him. In the Afternoon our venerable Sr. Barlow took her Leave of Bristol and set off to life at Fulneck loaded with the Love Respect and Blessing of the Brn. and Srs. of all Ages Choirs and Degrees. As the last Token of her kindness to us she gave us a Doz. of L F Cups and Saucers and a pretty Copper Pot

Friday 6 [March 1767]. Br. Traneker being returned from Bath told me that Br. Briant was heartily rejoiced that we would make another Trial with George; till I heard from his Father I had not settled George's Matters because he had placed too much Dependence on his Fathers Assistance, but I wanted he should bring himself through, and having now made it out with his Father I told George he must do his very best to bring himself thro' by cutting Matches etc., yet tis certain that cannot maintain him, so that I coud do nothing but look to our Saviour for his Help . . . ****

Monday 9 [March 1767]. When I came home [from Frome via Bath] I found all well and Sammy Frip returned from his Father and cured of that bad ailment. He is to board at our Table the same as the Brn. do. I thanked our Saviour for granting me my desire in this Respect, which was one of the things I wished for when I came first to Bristol but coud not effect till now for I lamented to see that poor Child like a Hermit or a Prisoner eating his victuals always by himself alone in the School and

there confined all Day. He is now to come from School into our Care the same as the rest of the Boys do.

Tuesday 10 [March 1767]. I took George Briant aside and told him he must place no Dependance upon his Father but bring himself through. I had promised his father to do my best to make it so though I know not how it coud be, but behold this very Day our Saviour in a great Measure accomplished my Hopes; for Br. Biggs voluntarily offered to let him [Briant] have the cleaning the House wch. will be 2s a week and all the Brthrn. afterwards came upon it to give him his Dinner fees for dressing the Dinner for them, and this will indeed bring him through with the cutting Matches or Wicks for Br. Frips, I was very thankful to our Saviour and took it as a good sign of his kind Intentions with that young Man.

Wednesday 11 [March 1767]. Br. Perkin not having Room enough in his shop for himself and John Walters to work we were obliged to enlarge the shop, which has proved a knotty affair to me to get the Money however having at last encouragement from Br. Frip as I had had from Br. Traneker before to begin about it, I had the good Luck to make a Bargain with Br. Pugh the Mason to undertake the whole for £3 and accordingly he begun about it to Day and did not finish it till the Monday following but then it was done to the Purpose, though he coud not accomplish it for that sum without being Loser and therefore Br. Traneker promised to indemnify him. Br. Perkins is to pay 2s for every Pound that is laid out, which is the Method in Building. I have been busy gardening, our Garden is much enriched in Dung, but the Sulpher and Smoke of the adjoining Sugar Houses renders my Toil in a great Measure abortive, however I dig up the Herb of Health if we get nothing else. **** Br. Stevens having now made up all matters with Br. Webb and dissolved the partnership and having a Promise from Br. Frip of a Place in his shop at 6 s a week and his Board to come in a Fortnights time, made an agreement with Sr. Lydiard to be her Servant in the meantime, so our Saviour however provides for him Today I was so very poorly that I got my Bed brought down in my Room ****

Sunday 29 [March 1767]. I wrote Br. Volkell and thanked him for the kind offer of his House. I began to Day to drink the Hot-well waters but I almost think that our Saviour will take me home. ****

Saturday 2 [April 1767]. The first thing I hear this Morning was that our good old respectable Father Marston was fled away unawares this Morning to our Saviour as if in Sleep. In Consequence of this Br. Harcourt⁶⁵ came down to me and as he coud be no longer there begged a Place in our House, where he staid a week. Soon after I got a Letter from Br. Hurlock, by which I could see he thinks my dear Sister in a Consumption. This made a peculiar Impression on me, as I have for some time had the same Thoughts of my self having long had hectic

⁶⁵ He was from a wealthy London family but squandered his inheritance and never finished his legal training, and he was an impoverished elderly man when he joined the Moravians.

complaints and a bad Cough, and I thought as we came to the Church below together so tis probable we shall keep Company to the Church above.

Sunday 5 [April 1767]. Br. Traneker was at Frome to Day, Br. Pyrleus here, and I at Kingswood. I kept the Boys Class there, but as they were not all there I bespoke them again after the Preaching, but then I found they had no mind to come; Br. Pugh and our two Boys came to me after Dinner and we walked home together ****

Friday 10 [April 1767]. I have gone for some time every Forenoon to the Hot-wells to drink the Waters. I have chiefly my Eye upon the poor sick consumptive People, and have tendered our Saviour to some now and then but tis surprising to see how they recoil at the very mention of their Redeemer, so that I have had very little Encouragement, however I have had some pretty Conversations with Mrs. Smith our Friend who keeps the Wells

Saturday 11 [April 1767]. Br. Harcourt sent his Goods and Bed to Br. Hills and Nelsons where he goes to live, but when he followed behold he found them painting the Room therefore he took Refuge at Br. Walters for another week. He told me it woud have been the greatest Grace to him to have spent the Remainder of his Days in our House, but we had no Room where he coud lodge.

Sunday 12 [April 1767]. At our Congregation Vestry to Day Br. Traneker mentioned a Deficiency that for some time hath befallen our weekly subscriptions especially by Sr. Barlow's going, and gave a Hint that if any Body found an ability and Inclination to augment their subscription it woud be wellcome, our Brn laid it to Heart and as our Saviour has of late increased the Power and Talents of our Brn. I had the pleasure to see that their Grace and Willingness kept Pace with it and they enlarged their subscription, 2 s per week among them, which they did in the most voluntary cheerful manner.

Monday 13 [April 1767]. . . . Br. Biggs came and kept Band with me and told me for a certain young women that had his Eye upon him. I advised him to let her know his scorn of such things. He assured me he was himself quite free from any thought of such things. It was but lately that Br. Traneker acquainted me of another such Affair, which Br. Biggs himself knows nothing of

Wednesday 15 [April 1767]. After I came home a pretty rough Joke was passed upon Br. Pugh about some disorderly things in the House. He had been galled about it before and now his warm Spirit was kindled and he went in a Pet to Bed without coming to the Evening Blessing. It was a real Pain to me for I was afraid he might spoil this Festival to himself as he did Christmas, but I went to his Bedside and desired him to come to me to morrow before he went to his work, which accordingly he did, he was indeed galled in his Spirit for it had been carried to far, but when he had vented himself I led him to the bleeding wound of our Saviour. and there his Heart got Light and Liberty and he promised to bury it all in his Blood. Afterwards Br. Perkin came to me expressing his Concern and Pain that he had hurted Br. Pugh's mind, but all was now over.

Tuesday 21 [April 1767]. Captain Grube a Norway Diaspora Br. now with his Ship in Bristol visited us now and often afterwards Mr. Green of Salisbury has also visited me several Times and I have had some real Conversations with him. Our Brethrens Conversation to Night by the Fire turned upon Guinea and the Invitation our Brn. have got from the Danish African Company and also from the Directory thither and I had a Proof that it would have been a difficult matter to have got a couple of our Brn for that Post if I had thought them ripe for it ****

Saturday 25 [April 1767]. I went with Br. and Sr. Traneker to Kingswood to keep LF with our dear Pyrleus on his Birthday and took a cordial leave of that Congregation. When I came home I found my dear Br. Volkel him whom our Brn. were heartily glad to see, and may our dear Saviour bless them abundantly together, and forgive poor me my numberless Defects.

[So ends the Entries for the Single Brs. Choir House Diary].

**LETTERS FROM WILLIAM PINE TO JOSEPH BENSON,
1794–1796**

Edited by Kenneth Morgan

LETTERS FROM WILLIAM PINE TO JOSEPH BENSON, 1794–96

The letters printed here form part of the extensive documentation that survives on the internal crisis in Methodism that occurred in the 1790s both in Bristol and throughout Britain.¹ Even though the correspondence is a one-way affair, it throws much light on the major issues at stake. The author of the letters, William Pine, was a trustee of the New Room by 1767.² He was a prominent publisher of Methodist material in Bristol in the 1760s and the printer of the first edition of John Wesley's works in the early 1770s. But his relationship with Wesley was not all sweetness and light. Pine supported the radical cause in the American War of Independence, a stance that led Wesley to accuse him of treason and to threaten him with expulsion from the Methodist society. In 1783 Pine also disagreed with Wesley over the trusteeship of the New Room. Both of these disputes were settled, however, and by the time Pine wrote to Joseph Benson he was a staunch supporter of the 'old plan' of Methodism and a trustee of the Guinea Street chapel, a Methodist congregation formed in 1779. He still published religious material but his sympathies had widened to incorporate Dissenting groups, especially the Baptists.³ Joseph Benson, the recipient of Pine's letters, was a leading Methodist preacher. Born in 1748, he was John Wesley's classical tutor at Kingswood School from 1767 until 1771. He then became a Wesleyan itinerant and was later president of the Methodist

¹ The documents are deposited in the Methodist Church Archives at the John Rylands University Library of Manchester (hereafter M.C.A., J.R.U.L.M.). Their call number is PLP 84.7.1–7.

² W.A Goss, 'Early Methodism in Bristol, with special reference to John Wesley's visits to the city, 1739–1790, and their impression on the People', *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, in nine parts, part V, XIX (1934), p. 136.

³ Jonathan Barry, 'Methodism and the Press in Bristol 1737–1775', Wesley Historical Society, Bristol Branch, Bulletin no. 64 (1992), pp. 16–19; John Wesley to Charles Wesley, 31 July 1775, in John Telford, ed., *The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley*, A.M., 8 vols. (London, 1931), VI, p. 170; 'Wesley's Printers and Booksellers,' *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, XXII (1939–40), p. 61.

Conference in 1798 and 1810. He died in 1821.⁴ Benson attended the Bristol Conference of July 1794, and during the early part of the proceedings was appointed to the Bristol circuit. Yet, as we shall see, he was absent from the city when the crisis of August 1794 occurred.⁵

Pine's letters to Benson illustrate several general issues: the relationship of Methodism to Dissent and the Church of England, the connection between the Methodist preachers and the laity, and the controversy over administration of the sacraments.⁶ These matters were left unresolved by John Wesley. Through sheer will power, discipline and regular pastoral ministration, he had unified the Methodist societies for many years, not least in Bristol and its surrounding area.⁷ But he left behind an ambiguous heritage. In 1784 in Bristol Wesley ordained Dr. Thomas Coke as superintendent to promote Methodism in North America and Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey as presbyters to accompany him. Between that date and his death in 1791, he ordained a further twenty-seven men. They included Henry Moore, the second man to be ordained for English work and a central figure in the Bristol crisis of 1794.⁸ The ordinations were highly controversial because the Anglican church insisted that they could only be carried out by a bishop and not by a priest. Many people, including Charles Wesley, thought that the ordinations were leading the Methodists towards Dissent.⁹ But John Wesley considered that all of his ordinands had the right to administer the Lord's Supper and regarded this as a pragmatic measure designed to offer communion to societies where the Anglican clergy neglected their priestly responsibilities.¹⁰

Administration of the sacraments crystallised the division between 'church methodists', who opposed the practice by unordained

⁴ Nolan B. Harmon, ed., *The Encyclopaedia of World Methodism*, 2 vols. (Nashville, Tennessee, 1974), I, pp. 253–4.

⁵ Richard Treffry, *Memoirs of the Rev. Joseph Benson* (London, 1840), pp. 185–6.

⁶ For general discussion of these matters see John Walsh, 'Methodism at the end of the Eighteenth Century' in Rupert E. Davies and E. Gordon Rupp, eds., *A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain*, 4 vols. (London, 1965–88), I, pp. 280–9; John C. Bowmer, *Pastor and People: A Study of Church and Ministry in Wesleyan Methodism from the death of John Wesley (1791) to the death of Jabez Bunting (1858)* (London, 1975), pp. 20–9; David Hempton, *Methodism and Politics in British Society 1750–1850* (London, 1984), pp. 55–84; and John Munsey Turner, *Conflict and Reconciliation: Studies in Methodism and Ecumenism in England 1740–1982* (London, 1985), ch. 5.

⁷ On his work in Bristol see John Kent, ed., 'Wesleyan Membership in Bristol 1783' in *An Ecclesiastical Miscellany* (Publications of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, Records Section, XI, 1976), pp. 105–32, and Kenneth Morgan, *John Wesley and Bristol*, Bristol Branch of the Historical Association, Pamphlet no. 75 (Bristol, 1990).

⁸ Rupert E. Davies, 'Old King Street Chapel (Ebenezer), Bristol', Wesley Historical Society, Bristol Branch, Bulletin no. 39 (1984), p. 1; Harmon, ed., *Encyclopaedia of World Methodism*, II, pp. 1664–5. Moore's ordination certificate, dated 27 Feb. 1789, is deposited at Wesley College, Bristol under the call number D1/6.

⁹ Samuel Bradburn, *The Question, Are the Methodists Dissenters? Fairly Examined* (2nd edn., Bristol, 1793), pp. 9, 12.

¹⁰ Davies, 'Old King Street Chapel (Ebenezer), Bristol', p. 1.

clergymen, and 'new planners', who acknowledged the right of lay preachers to give communion. The issue was difficult to resolve because neither side wanted total integration with, or total separation from, the Church of England.¹¹ Bristol provided a test case for this matter two years before the first of the letters by Pine printed here. The location of the dispute was the newly-founded Portland Chapel, which had been built to accommodate Methodists in the fashionable suburb of Kingsdown.¹² At its opening service, on 26 August 1792, the Rev. Samuel Bradburn, who succeeded Henry Moore as superintendent of the Bristol circuit, wore clerical vestments and read the liturgy at the request of the trustees of the chapel. This invoked the anger of the trustees of the New Room and Guinea Street chapel, who acted together as one body. It also incurred the wrath of the vicar of Westbury-on-Trym, who was sensitive to the potential rivalry of a chapel just beyond the boundaries of his parish. The dispute was over whether a Methodist preacher had the authority to conduct a service in this way.¹³ The trustees had total power over the New Room after Wesley's death. They were supporters of the 'old plan' of Methodism who believed that people should worship in their parish church and receive communion there administered by an Anglican priest, and that the Methodist societies should follow such practice to remain within the boundaries accepted by the Established Church.¹⁴ Bradburn had to contend with a printed attack on his actions at Portland Chapel by six of the New Room trustees, but was confident that he had the support of the Methodist societies in Bristol.¹⁵ At the 1793 Methodist Conference a compromise was reached. The wearing of clerical vestments and the use of the title reverend were abolished (which pleased the 'High Church' party) but the trustees, although now officially recognised, conceded to Conference the right to appoint preachers. The sacramental question, however, was left undecided, for the Conference agreed that there should be no services in church hours and no administration of the Eucharist without unanimous consent.¹⁶

The Methodist controversy of 1794 in Bristol began with Benson's firm conference speech on the dangers of schism. This was in July of that year.¹⁷ Benson left the city immediately after the conference ended.

¹¹ Hempton, *Methodism and Politics in British Society*, p. 59.

¹² For a history of the chapel see A. J. Lambert, *The Chapel on the Hill* (Bristol, 1930).

¹³ E. Ralph Bates, 'Portland Chapel, Bristol', Wesley Historical Society, Bristol Branch, Bulletin no. 38 (1983), pp. 1–3; Thomas W. Blanshard, *The Life of Samuel Bradburn, the Methodist Demosthenes* (2nd edn., London, 1871), pp. 146–7. For the sermon preached at the opening of Portland Chapel see Samuel Bradburn, *Methodism Set Forth and Defended* (2nd edn., Bristol, 1792).

¹⁴ E. Ralph Bates, 'Guinea Street Chapel, Redcliffe', Wesley Historical Society, Bristol Branch, Bulletin no. 35 (1982), p. 3.

¹⁵ M.C.A., J.R.U.L.M., Samuel Bradburn Memoranda Books, vol. 1, Sept. and Oct. 1792.

¹⁶ Blanshard, *Life of Samuel Bradburn*, p. 149; John A. Vickers, *Thomas Coke: Apostle of Methodism* (London, 1969), p. 205.

¹⁷ Treffry, *Memoirs of the Rev. Joseph Benson*, p. 185.

Significant events occurred in Bristol, with regard to the sacramental problem, before he returned. These incidents are described in the first three letters transcribed here. William Pine noted that, on 9 August, the New Room and Guinea Street trustees resolved that if Henry Moore gave the sacrament in Bristol they would oppose his preaching in their chapels because he was not an ordained priest in the Church of England. The following day their worst fears were realised when Coke, Bradburn, Moore and their supporters assembled at Portland Chapel. Vasey and Coke respectively read the service and gave the Eucharist, and they were joined by Moore and Thomas Taylor. This caused consternation among the congregation. In the evening Thomas Rutherford preached a sermon of mutual forbearance between the opposing parties, but the situation remained divisive. On 11 August the trustees sent a written notice to Moore, forbidding him from preaching in either of their chapels. They took possession of the desk where he was due to preach at Broadmead in the evening, and obstructed him from doing so. On his arrival at the New Room, Moore found the trustees in the pulpit and so he decided to read out the attorney's letter to the large congregation. It was Pine, according to a society member present, who assured the meeting that those who wished to receive the sacrament from Moore should follow him to Portland Street.¹⁸ Moore left at once, stating that he had been appointed by Conference to preach in the circuit, and around 100 members of the meeting followed him up the hill. According to Pine, they were 'hissing, hollowing and clapping their hands', and they left as a mob.¹⁹ Richard Rodda gave out a hymn to drown the clamour at the New Room and, after the noise settled down, he preached together with Jeremiah Brettell.²⁰

Pine noted that two-thirds of the congregation was still left when Moore departed. They were staunch supporters of Church Methodism, and would not sanction innovations to worship. They included some wealthy, influential men who were difficult to control: even John Wesley had been unable to govern them.²¹ Pine himself was deeply worried about the 'old Methodists' being threatened 'with opposition chapels'.²² In his view the divided congregations would not unite as long as Moore remained among them. The dispute was between Moore and the trustees; if Moore were to withdraw, there would be no problem. Such a solution did not come about, however. A postscript, written by Brettell, suggested that Moore had little influence in Bristol, but this is

¹⁸ M.C.A., J.R.U.L.M., Daniel Wait to Joseph Benson, 13 Aug. 1794 (PLP 110.1.35).

¹⁹ See below, p. 160. The Portland chapel trustees had earlier indicated their preference for Moore to conduct the Sacrament: see entries for 27 June 1793 and 10 July 1794 in Bristol Record Office, Portland Chapel: *Journal of Minutes of Meetings of Trustees, 1793–1872* (Acc. 21780/12).

²⁰ See below, p. 160.

²¹ John Pawson to Joseph Benson, 16 Aug. 1794, in Rupert Davies, A. Raymond George and Gordon Rupp, eds., *A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain*, 4 vols. (London, 1965–88), IV, p. 260.

²² See below, p. 160.

highly questionable given the evidence on the dispute. Pine wanted Benson to come to Bristol post haste. He expected him to silence the clamour, and noted that many of the 'old cause' supporters were rejoicing at Benson's imminent arrival.²³

Moore's actions were provocative, and it may be that he knew beforehand that trouble would ensue from his behaviour.²⁴ Yet he acted with dignity and restraint in the face of obstructive behaviour by the trustees, and he had long administered the Lord's Supper and service in church hours in Bath before the Bristol controversy broke out. Moreover the attorney's letter sent to Moore, requesting him not to appear on the trustees' premises, was unprecedented and elevated the power of the trustees to an extent that was unacceptable to many Methodists.²⁵ Moore, along with Coke and Rutherford, quickly became involved in plans to resolve the situation by erecting a new Methodist building in Bristol, the Ebenezer or Old King Street Chapel. This was intended to accommodate people who supported liberty of conscience and lay administration of the sacraments, and who were against what they deemed to be the tyrannical authority of the trustees.²⁶ A flurry of correspondence ensued about Moore's involvement in the controversy, too detailed to be cited in full here.²⁷ The Bristol Society wrote to Benson to raise the central question of who should appoint the Methodist preachers – the trustees or Conference. They regarded the trustees' behaviour with regard to Moore as a betrayal of Methodist itinerancy. They hoped that Benson would not support the trustees.²⁸ Benson replied by expressing distress at the problems that had occurred in Bristol, and wrote that he intended to turn up in the city soon. He agreed that only Conference should appoint preachers in the Methodist connection.²⁹

Benson was anxious about returning to Bristol to keep his appointment given the situation described by Pine. He discussed his position in detail with several colleagues, who strongly advised him to

²³ See below, p. 162

²⁴ Vickers, *Thomas Coke*, p. 206; W. R. Ward, *Religion and Society in England 1790–1850* (London, 1972), p. 31.

²⁵ Blanshard, *Life of Samuel Bradburn*, p. 156; Jonathan Crowther, *A Portraiture of Methodism: or, the History of the Wesleyan Methodists* (London, 1815), p. 133.

²⁶ M.C.A., J.R.U.L.M., Thomas Coke, Henry Moore and Thomas Rutherford to Mr. King, 25 Aug. 1794 (PLP 28.8.27).

²⁷ For specific citations to this material see Hempton, *Methodism and Politics in British Society*, pp. 63–5, and T.S.A. MacQuiban, 'The Sacramental Controversy in Bristol in the 1790s,' *Wesley Historical Society, Bristol Branch, Bulletin* no. 60 (1991). Amongst the contemporary literature on the dispute, the positions of the 'old planners' and 'new planners' can be followed respectively in *Candid Animadversions on Mr. Henry Moore's Reply, by the Author of "Considerations on a Separation of the Methodists from the Established Church"* (Bristol, 1794) and in Jonathan Crowther, *Truth and Matter of Fact: Or, A Plain and Impartial Account of the Nature and Causes of some disputes among the Methodists in the City and Circuit of Bristol...* (3rd edn., Bristol, 1794).

²⁸ M.C.A., J.R.U.L.M., The Bristol Society to Joseph Benson, 28 Aug. 1794 (PLP 7.9.6).

²⁹ M.C.A., J.R.U.L.M., Benson to the Bristol Society, 28 Aug. 1794 (PLP 7.9.6).

go to Bristol. He then decided that he must fulfil the role allocated to him by Conference.³⁰ But he knew that his position could not be neutral; either he would have to support the trustees or Conference. Since he inclined more to the Church Methodists, it is not surprising that, on arrival in Bristol, he joined Rodda and Vasey in support of the 'old cause'. They attached a short paragraph to a circular letter of the trustees accusing their opponents at Portland Chapel of wishing to divide the authority of Conference and the body of Methodist preachers, of interfering with the superintendent of the District in his work, and of beginning to build a new chapel without the consent of Conference or the District meeting.³¹ But most preachers and hearers sided against the trustees by supporting the sacramentalist position. Only around 200 members of the Bristol Society chose to stay with Benson; 1,300 attached themselves to Moore. A District meeting summoned by Moore approved of his conduct. Benson then refused to accept Moore's offer to leave the Bristol circuit.³²

The wounds were not healed and the Bristol circuit remained divided. Benson, Rodda and Vasey preached at the New Room, at Guinea Street and at Keynsham, but to diminished audiences. Portland Chapel was closed to them because of their support for 'the old cause'. Moore, Rutherford, Jonathan Crowther and John Grant exercised their ministry in other parts of the circuit.³³ But the problems continued. In October 1794 a further inflammatory incident occurred at Kingswood where Rodda was prevented from preaching by Moore's supporters, and Coke was carried triumphantly to take his place.³⁴ In late 1794 Benson noted that the disputes at Bristol were 'very unhappy indeed, and I fear not likely to be soon ended.'³⁵ But in early 1795 Benson held many meetings with other Methodist preachers in order to resolve the sacramental controversy.³⁶ Bradburn thought that peace could only be achieved by opening the new chapel, and that only Conference could effect a proper reconciliation.³⁷ He was perhaps too sanguine. Bradburn and Moore came to terms with their opponents and, at the Manchester Conference of 1795, a Plan of Pacification was drawn up. This proved to be yet another compromise. It affirmed the right of Conference to

³⁰ Treffry, *Memoirs of the Rev. Joseph Benson*, pp. 185–9.

³¹ George Smith, *History of Wesleyan Methodism. Vol. II: The Middle Age* (London, 1858), pp. 113–14.

³² Mrs. Richard Smith, *The Life of the Rev. Mr. Henry Moore* (London, 1844), p. 131.

³³ Treffry, *Memoirs of the Rev. Joseph Benson*, pp. 190–1; Blanshard, *Life of Samuel Bradburn*, p. 156; Joseph Benson, Richard Rodda and Thomas Vasey to the preachers late in connection with the Rev. Mr. Wesley, 26 Sept. 1794 (printed letter in the Frank Baker Collection at Duke University Library).

³⁴ Vickers, *Thomas Coke*, pp. 208–9.

³⁵ Joseph Benson to George Merryweather, 12 Dec. 1794, in Davies et al., eds., *History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain*, IV, p. 262.

³⁶ Ward, *Religion and Society in England*, p. 33; Treffry, *Memoirs of the Rev. Joseph Benson*, pp. 193–4, 207.

³⁷ M.C.A., J.R.U.L.M., *Samuel Bradburn Memoranda Books*, vol. 1, Aug. and Sept. 1794.

appoint preachers and, on the sacramental issue, insisted that the majority of trustees had to be in favour and Conference had to consent to the practice. Nevertheless, the Eucharist was not to be celebrated in Methodist chapels during church hours or when the sacraments were administered on Sunday in a parish church.³⁸

On 28 June 1795 Ebenezer Chapel opened and became a venue for the progressive Methodists who had deserted the New Room and Guinea Street chapels. This naturally displeased Pine and his supporters, but there was an attempt to calm fraught nerves when, at the end of the 1795 Conference, an exchange of pulpits, with Benson preaching at Portland Street and Moore at the New Room, tried to heal the breach over the sacramental controversy.³⁹ By October of that year, Benson reported that matters were much more peaceful at Bristol than he had anticipated. The opposing parties, he claimed, were sufficiently united 'that the bulk of the people on both sides hear, promiscuously, at all the chapels: but there are individuals, not a few, who will not yet be prevailed upon to go to the new chapel, & some have left the Society on account of the Old Room being shut upon a Sunday evening.'⁴⁰ The 1796 Conference supported the closure of the New Room to Sunday preaching. Thereafter supporters of 'the old cause' had to attend a lecture at St. Werburgh's church on Sunday evenings and preaching at the New Room on Mondays and Thursdays and at Guinea Street on Wednesdays.⁴¹

The final four letters from Pine to Benson, all written in 1796, indicate that matters were still on tenterhooks in the Bristol society. Pine was still vexed that Methodism might sever its links with the Church of England. The possibility that Methodists might become 'a body of Dissenters' horrified him. He wanted decency and decorum observed in places of public worship, and was worried that many members had been lost through lack of consistency in religious practice. Most of the 280 members who left the Bristol Methodist Society between 1793 and 1797 were probably 'old planners' who returned to the Church of England.⁴² Pine was concerned that the Plan of Pacification would be ineffective, that it would be just a further internal problem that had beset Methodism since the death of its founder. Pine's main attacks were reserved for attempts to violate the Plan, as his many italicised phrases in the letter of 11 July show. Pine was also worried about the secession attempts of Alexander Kilham, an itinerant preacher who was dissatisfied with the Plan. Kilham had supported the sacramentarian party against the 'old planners' in Bristol, and he advocated separate communion from the Church of England. He challenged the Methodist leadership in a series of publications including *The Progress of Liberty*

³⁸ Vickers, *Thomas Coke*, p. 211.

³⁹ Treffry, *Memoirs of the Rev. Joseph Benson*, pp. 211–12.

⁴⁰ Joseph Benson to Rev. Peard Dickinson, 8 Oct. 1795, in Davies et al., eds., *History of the Methodist Church of Great Britain*, IV, p. 267.

⁴¹ See below, p. 169.

⁴² MacQuiban, 'The Sacramental Controversy in Bristol,' p. 20.

among the People called Methodists (1795). Pine was relieved when Kilham was expelled from the Methodist Connection in 1796 after he had refused to withdraw his publications.⁴³

On 8 August 1796 Pine noted that the Bristol Society was no more unanimous about preaching in church hours than it had been a year before. He complained to Benson that Joseph Bradford's preaching at the Old King Street chapel in church hours violated the decrees of Conference. He clashed with the District committee on this matter, but they defended Bradford's actions. Pine also complained bitterly about the decision by Bradford to stop financial assistance to poor members of the New Room and Guinea Street congregations who, as a consequence, were reduced to begging. All in all, Pine was unhappy at the way in which the 'church methodists' found their position eroded. Yet he espoused a minority position, for supporters of the 'old cause' had to concede much ground to their opponents. The opening of the Old King Street chapel, with its more flexible arrangements for administering the sacraments and holding services in church hours, made the trustees of the New Room and Guinea Street chapel realise that their opposition was hopeless.⁴⁴

As a result of the divisions in Bristol Methodism in the 1790s, the New Room society became divided and never recovered its former position. The 'new planners' of the New Room departed for the Old King Street chapel, and until 1800 those from Guinea Street met in a chapel in Temple street. A small group of Church Methodists continued to meet at Guinea Street until the end of the century. But when, in October 1800, they realised that they could no longer continue with greatly diminished numbers, the property was handed over to the Old King Street trustees. The care of the New Room passed to the same trustees, who sold it in 1808, after which it became a centre for the Calvinist Methodists.⁴⁵ The disintegration of 'church methodism' within a few years at Bristol was mortifying for William Pine, who died in 1803 aged sixty-four.⁴⁶ Nationwide it is significant, however, that Methodism in the 1790s only experienced a small secession under Kilham, and emerged relatively unscathed from the heightened political and social agitation of the first years of the French Revolution.⁴⁷ For all the problems over the relationship of Methodism to the Established Church, the continued existence of an itinerant ministry and connectional structure, of religious fervour and a sense of community, and of evangelical Arminianism with few doctrinal disagreements, were sufficient to bind together the Wesleyan Methodist societies in the early nineteenth century.⁴⁸

⁴³ See below, pp. 164, 167.

⁴⁴ H. J. Foster, 'Portland Circuit, Bristol,' *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, XVII (1930), pp. 140–1.

⁴⁵ Davies, 'Old King Street Chapel,' p. 2; Bates, 'Guinea Street Chapel,' p. 7.

⁴⁶ John Nicholls, *Illustrations of the Literary History of the Eighteenth Century*, 8 vols. (London, 1817–58), VIII, p. 471. Pine's will is available at the Public Record Office, London: see PROB 11/1402/988.

⁴⁷ Walsh, 'Methodism at the end of the Eighteenth Century,' p. 304.

⁴⁸ Hempton, *Methodism and Politics in British Society*, p. 58.

Bristol 12 August 1794¹

Dear Sir

I think if you were now among us we should soon have Peace. The Partizans of Portland Chapel have withdrawn themselves, together with their Leader. The Circumstances which led to this Event may probably be best related from a Copy of my Journal on the Occasion, vizt.

Saturday the 9th the Trustees met, and came to a Resolution that if Mr. Moore² gave the Sacrament they would oppose his Preaching either in Broadmead or Guinea Street Chapels; as there was no necessity for such a measure, and must proceed from the Spirit of Opposition.

Sunday 10. Dr. Coke,³ Mr. Bradburn,⁴ Mr. Moore and their Party, being determined to carry all before them, assembled at Portland Chapel. Mr. Vasey⁵ read the Service, Dr. Coke preached, and afterwards they proceeded to give the Sacraments and were joined by Mr. Moore and Mr. Thomas Taylor.⁶ At these Proceedings many of [the] People were much grieved. Mr. Rutherford⁷ preached in the Evening, and recommended mutual Forbearance, Liberty of Conscience, and in Fact, the giving up of every Thing to their Party for the sake of Peace! But this was a Doctrine the Trustees and the Supporters of the old Cause of Methodism could not receive. Just as Mr. Rutherford was concluding, Mr. Bradburn came into the Desk, and desired Mr. Rutherford to give out that Mr Moore would preach there Monday Evening. When the Society was settled, down came Mr. Moore to meet them, accompanied by Mr. Bradburn, Dr. Coke etc. Several of the Trustees immediately left the Place.

Monday the Trustees met at Eleven o'Clock, and sent a written notice to Mr. Moore, forbidding his Preaching in either of their Chapels, or

¹ The first three of these letters were sent to Benson in Manchester; the fourth and fifth letters were dispatched to him at Leeds; and the sixth and seventh letters were forwarded to him at City Road, London.

² Henry Moore (1751–1844): an Irishman who became a Wesleyan itinerant in 1779. He was a close friend of John Wesley, who made him one of the three custodians of his manuscripts. He was a minister in the Bristol Circuit in 1794 and President of the Wesleyan Conference in 1804 and 1823.

³ Thomas Coke (1747–1814): ordained by John Wesley in 1784 to superintend Methodism in the U.S.A. He was active in the Methodist ministry between 1776 and his death.

⁴ Samuel Bradburn (1751–1816): a Wesleyan preacher from 1774 onwards. He was appointed minister in the Bristol Circuit in 1792–3. He was secretary of Conference in 1796–8 and 1800 and President in 1799.

⁵ Thomas Vasey (c. 1746–1826): ordained a deacon and then an elder by John Wesley in 1784. He joined Thomas Coke and Richard Whatcoat in the United States for the next five years, but then returned to England. He was a minister in the Bristol Circuit in 1794.

⁶ Thomas Taylor (1738–1816): held various Methodist appointments between 1765 and his death. One of a small group of preachers on whom John Wesley relied during his last decade. Taylor was President of Conference in 1796, when he expelled Alexander Kilham, and again in 1809.

⁷ Thomas Rutherford: held various Wesleyan ministerial appointments between 1772 and 1806. He was a minister in the Bristol Circuit in 1792.

making any Trespass upon their Trust Premises, which was delivered into his own Hands before Dinner. The Trustees met at the Chapel in Broadmead about an Hour before Preaching and took Possession of the Desk, etc. Mr. Moore and his Party came there a Quarter before Seven, and immediately as he was going towards the Pulpit two of the trustees stepped into it. He said, "Gentlemen I am not come to preach, but only to speak a few Words to the People." The Trustees kept their Places till he sat down. Mr. Jeremiah Brittle,⁸ accompanied by Mr. Rodda⁹ and Mr. Vasey, came into the Desk to preach (that Business being settled, that the Congregation might not be disappointed). Mr. Moore rose immediately and went towards the Pulpit. Mr. Brittle kept by his Side, when one of Mr. Moore's Friends cried out, "Take care Mr. Moore, or Mr. Brittle will throw you down."

Mr. Moore then addressed the People for about 5 minutes, saying He had been that Day forbid Preaching in that Place by the Trustees; he took the Notice that was sent him out of his Pocket and read it; said he was appointed by the Conference to this Circuit, the same as Mr. Brittle was appointed to another that he stood in that Place; that he was averse to Disputes of every Kind, and particularly so to *legal Disputes*; therefore he should leave the Place to the Direction of the Gentlemen Trustees and go immediately and preach at Portland Chapel. On which some of the lower Class of the People began hissing, hollowing, and clapping their Hands, and rushed out of the Chapel as fast as they could, violently [torn page] the Trustees. However their Numbers were not many (supposed to be about 100) for we had left a very [torn page] comfortable Congregation.

Mr. Rodda gave out a Hymn to drown the clamour, and in 4 or 5 minutes all was Peace. Mr. Rodda then prayed very fervently for a considerable Time, after which Mr. Brittle preached a useful Sermon adapted to the Occasion, and the Service ended as quiet as though nothing had happened. There were several Preachers in different parts of the Chapel but none of them said a word.

We are threatened today with opposition Chapels, etc. but we are thankful for the Prospect of Peace, and have no Fear on that Head.

We think we have a House in View that will just suit you, and shall be glad to know when we may expect your Return. Mr. Rutherford preaches tonight at Portland Chapel, and we are informed they intend to have Preaching every Night, so that we hope much Good will be done, as we have no Intention to bind their Consciences, and we hope they will have us at Liberty also.

I am your very affectionate Friend

William Pine

⁸ Jeremiah Brettell: an itinerant Wesleyan preacher, who served mainly in Manchester, Bristol and London.

⁹ Richard Rodda (1743–1815): a Wesleyan preacher from 1769 until his death, especially in Wales and Cornwall. Appointed a minister in the Bristol Circuit in 1793.

Bristol August 16, 1794

Dear Sir

The Account that I sent you was true in every Particular, as far as I am capable of judging, who was an Eye witness. After Mr. Moore and his Party went away on Monday, there appeared to be full two-thirds of the Congregation left; and on my inquiring of Mr. Rodda and others, respecting the Numbers that went off, was informed that in their Opinion they did not exceed 100. And every Night since, we have had quite as large a Number, if not more, than is usual to attend when we were all at Peace; so that we do not miss them at all, which is a very extraordinary Circumstance. But we account for it from the Declarations of those who attend, who say they are very glad they are gone; many of whom did not, nor would not attend the Preaching of those who wished to introduce their Innovations among us.

Respecting the *Unanimity* of the Leaders, it is a very great Mistake, for we have many of the old and most valuable of them decidedly with us. Sister Johnson has come forward and declared herself on our Side, with several others, who all hope that the Separation which Mr. Moore has made may remain, as it will be impossible for us ever to unite whilst Persons of his Sentiments remain among us.

The Stewards you know are of his Side being of his appointing, and Portland Trustees.¹⁰

Every Step was taken on Monday to collect the Leaders and all others from various Parts of the Town, who were of his Party, to come down; and yet the whole Muster do not appear in the Judgement of several that I have again consulted this Day to exceed 100. But as they went through the Town in a Kind of Mob, it is no wonder if they increased their Numbers by the Time they got to Portland Chapel.

Mr. Hey, having the Matter greatly misrepresented to him, granted his Chapels in return for the Favor which he had of us sometime back, while his Meeting was repairing; but has since said, if he had known it had been to support a Party he should not have done it.¹¹

This Rent is entirely made by Mr. Moore, who has taken away the People to support his Cause; for the Dispute was between him and the Trustees; had he withdrawn himself there would have been no Division.

We are at present happy and comfortable, and if they will leave us alone, we shall go on well, and the Cause of God will greatly prosper among us. They are going, it is said, to build a new Chapel out of Hand;¹² we have no Objection; we do not desire to interfere with them at all; there is Room enough for both Parties, and if we can agree to disagree it

¹⁰ Portland Chapel originally had nineteen trustees.

¹¹ John Hey was pastor of the Castle Green Independent Chapel in 1789 and minister of the Lewin's Mead meeting house in 1790. In September 1790, with John Wesley's permission, he had used the New Room for Sunday preaching while the Lewin's Mead meeting house was being rebuilt.

¹² i.e. Ebenezer (Old King Street) Chapel.

will be the best Step, perhaps, that can be taken. However, we are sure of this, if you were here you would do us a great Deal of Good and the Trustees and their Friends entreat that you would hasten to us as soon as you can. They do not want to break from the Methodist Connection, but only from those men who are a Cause of Strife and Division among us. We have secured the House in York Street, and bought some of the Furniture, and we would advise you without Delay to come and see it fitted up to your Mind, that Mrs. Benson and Family may be comfortably accommodated, which is the Intention of the Trustees.

I remain, dear Sir,

Your very affectionate

William Pine

Richard Rodda

Thomas Vasey

P.S. We desire to assure you that the above Representation is strictly true, and we beg you would make all possible Haste to Bristol. My dear Brother I believe the enclosed is a Just relation of facts. I had intended to leave this place on Monday and to have been with you on Thursday, but shall now stay a day or two longer. I rejoice at the prospect of good in this place; and also, that I have a Small share of reproach from violent men. You will have it in your power to correct stubbornness, and to bring down the haughty. I think Mr. Moore will soon know his little influence in this place, and it may be the best thing that could befall him, as a means rightly to know himself. He is certainly disappointed. Neither he nor Bradburn could believe the Trustees would exclude him. And they were not a little wounded to find that we quietly took up the cause of Injured men. Peace attend you. My love to Mrs Benson

Yours etc Jeremiah Brettell

Bristol 23 August 1794

My dear Sir

I sincerely thank you for your last. All our friends rejoice that you are coming; for they expect you will soon be able to silence the Clamour of the poor People that are driven half mad by the gross misrepresentations of our Adversaries. Every Thing that can blacken and traduce our Characters has been said, and particularly by Mr. Bradburn *from the Pulpit*; but he is gone to Bath for the present. The Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore are taking a Collection to build another Chapel. And when the Dr. is asked if the Trustees have forbid his Preaching, or any one else besides Mr. Moore he says "No: but the Conference must be supported!"

Mr. Brettell left us yesterday Morning, and probably you will see him before this arrives who will give you the Particulars. It is a mortifying Circumstance to the *Seceders* to find that so many Persons stand by the *old Cause*, and that our Congregations are so well kept up.

We are going on with your House as fast as possible, and shall get it soon

ready. We hope to see you by this Day se'enight, and that you will preach on Sunday. Pray favor me with a Line that we may announce the same.

My kind Love to Mrs. Benson (and Family) and tell her we shall be all happy to see her here; as we have no Doubt but as soon as we have rid out this Storm, we shall have an agreeable and comfortable calm.

I remain, dear Sir,

Yours very affectionately,

William Pine

P.S. If Mr. Smith is returned, I beg my kind Respects to him and Family; and tell him that Mr. Owen is arrived.

Bristol 14 January 1796

My dear Sir

Yours of the 7th I received and am glad to hear that Mrs. Benson and your Family are all well. We frequently think and talk of you here; but were almost ready to conclude you had forgot us.

Mr. Wait received your Letter, giving an Account of your Journey and welcome Reception. Surely the Lord was with you of a Truth, and we rejoiced in your Consolation. Better Weather could not have been wished for at the Season of the Year than you were favored with, and indeed all Things conspired to verify that Promise "*I am God all sufficient.*" And seeing that is the Case, what have we to do, but to *walk in the old Path.*

The Spirit of Disloyalty and Innovation go Hand in Hand, and will most certainly spread if it be not firmly opposed by those who have Piety and Respectability in the Connection; and where it will end God only knows. I am glad you are enabled to bear an honest Testimony against those Evils, and hope you will do it unto the End.

I have no Doubt but the Devil wants to bring a Disgrace upon the Cause of God, by spreading his wild-fire among the People. He sees that the Lord is carrying on his Work notwithstanding the Contentions and Divisions that he has fomented among us, therefore he is playing off another Device, that Scoffers and Infidels may have a further Handle to depreciate Religion as an irrational Thing; and of Course give its Enemies cause of Triumph. Perhaps it may not be adviseable to check the Spirit altogether; but it most certainly is proper that Decency and Decorum should be preserved in all Places of public Worship, for God is not the Author of Confusion. Therefore I think the Preachers should not permit those Irregularities *in the Preaching Houses* by any Means. They are calculated merely to work on the animal Spirits and very little is to be expected from Efforts of that Nature, as long Experience have evinced. We are not to *do Evil that Good may come* is a sufficient Answer, I think, to all Contenders for such irrational proceedings. These

are the Views that Miss Ritchie and Mrs. Pine¹³ also have of this Business.

You ask, Is it Peace? I answer, What Peace, Jehu? While etc. etc. etc. However, we have Reason to be thankful that the Congregations are numerous at all our Chapels, and we hope the Work is prospering. But not more so than if all Things were going on right; for we know that many have taken Offence and left us, and others are kept away from our Want of Consistency. Yet God is able to bring Good out of this Evil. We have done what we can to prevent it; and as the Cause is his, He will maintain it.

We have not seen Mr. Kilham's *Progress of Liberty*¹⁴ etc. but we should be glad of a Sight of it, if we could tell how to come at it. This is a Time, it is to be feared, that Methodism will run wild, unless great Caution is taken by those who have Influence. The Bridle is already in some measure cast on the neck of the Steed, and if it be not stopped some of the Riders will get a Fall.

What will an Address to the King do? As much probably as that to Washington. Prove that the Dr. and his Friends are ready to acknowledge on *all Occasions* *the Powers that be are ordained of God!* and also, that the Methodists are become *a Body of Dissenters*, though they are ashamed openly to avow it. For the Charge brought against them is not *so much* for their Disloyalty in general as for their Departure from the established Church. And unless that could be disavowed in the Address, it is my Opinion it will do more Harm than Good.

I have or shall present your kind Remembrance to all the Persons mentioned in your Letter. And I can with certainty assure you, that you stand high in their most sincere Regards.

Mrs. Pine, Miss Ritchie, and my whole Household join in kind Love and best wishes to you and Mrs. Benson with

Your very affectionate Friend and Servant
William Pine

Pray remember us very sincerely to Mrs. Crosby and our good Friend Mr. Hardon.

¹³ William Pine first married Elizabeth Owen, but she had died by 1780. His second wife was the daughter of the Rev. Thomas Broughton of St. Mary Redcliffe. Pine married her on 10 July 1780.

¹⁴ Alexander Kilham (1762–98): in the 1790s a leading advocate of an increased share in the government of the Wesleyan societies by the laity. He was expelled by Conference in 1796 for his views. With William Thom, he drafted the constitution adopted by the Methodist New Connection.

Bristol, July 11, 1796

Sir

You say in your Letter to Mr. Wait "the old cause is not so far gone as I suppose; and that I must go to Conference to assist in seeing the Plan of Pacification observed, as the *only ground* on which you think we can keep together."

Much has been said heretofore of the "wholesome Rules and Decrees of Conference." But who has regarded them? Or who has come forward to enforce them when broken? Have they not been violated from year to year ever since Mr. Wesley's death? And has not that been the cause of the unhappy division at Bristol and elsewhere? And is the *Plan of Pacification* (of which so much has been lately said) likely to meet with a better fate?

We are *gravely* told here that the Agreement was only for a year. The first article in the Addenda respecting making a Separation in the Society is said to be of no force if a *Majority* can but be raised. Therefore all necessary Preparations are made for opening the New Chapel in Church hours, and to turn us into a *complete Body of Dissenters*. And this is done under the sanction of our Preachers who say, "Why are you alarmed before the time comes, though we do not say it will not come; for we believe it will at the Conference."

We were therefore determined that they should not go and impose upon the Conference by saying it was all unanimity and peace; consequently we fairly gave Notice that whenever that event happened we should not stand in their connection. So that we shall shortly see whether the Plan of Pacification be more than "a Tub thrown out to the whale;" which many of the Preachers consider in that light, and have treated it accordingly. And indeed one or two of them here have said that the Conference *settled* it that nothing should be considered a *Separation* (notwithstanding what is *asserted* in the first article of the Addenda) unless a Preacher went off with the people. If so, what *duplicity!* what *Jesuitism!*

You recommend our reading Messrs. Mather and Pawson's Address.¹⁵ I have done it, and perceive the *Shadow* following the *Substance*. They have invited or assisted the People to dissent from their old Principles, or have *joined* with those that have so done in order to form a party. And what is the consequence? They are reaping the fruits which necessarily grow from such *Dissension*. But they begin to complain the fruits are *sour!* And so they will be till properly *grafted*, which they will not find an easy matter to do. The Methodist Preachers while considered of no party, or only as auxiliaries to the Church of England, stood on

¹⁵ Alexander Mather and John Pawson, *An Affectionate Address to the Members of the Methodist Societies* (London, 1796), a defence of itinerancy and a critique of the sole right of the trustees to govern the Methodist societies. A year earlier, in May 1795, Mather and Pawson had sent a circular letter to the whole Methodist society in Bristol, warning them to heal the breach and overcome the divisions between 'old planners' and 'new planners.'

unsuspected ground by their own people, and none could take that ground from them; but as far as they have deviated therefrom, they have met the common lot of all *Seceders*.

In the above Address it appears how necessary it is for *Preachers* as well as *Trustees* (*on certain occasions*) to shelter themselves under the wing of their departed Father. But how can *they* do this, who depart both from his general Principles and Example? who set up a few actions of the weak part of his life as a Standard, and contrast them with the general tenor in order to carry their favourite point?

"His reputation (say Messrs. Mather and Pawson) is of greater importance than all ours put together." But why not discuss this before?

"The Methodists, as a body, are a quiet peaceable people and if *left to themselves* would no more think of making divisions than of flying." Then why not *leave them to themselves*? Why suffer *Bears* and *Wolves* to worry and destroy them?

"But the dreadful consequences of any of you losing your simplicity is by men who form among yourselves, arise, speaking perverse things, only to draw disciples after them." Why not separate from such men?

"We do not understand that it is *scriptural* for a part of a religious Society to wish to have *its laws altered*, yes, its whole constitution changed." Why then permit it to be done?

"Let no one deceive or draw you from your own stedfastness, therefore meddle not with men who are given to change" (but how can we avoid it unless we leave the connection, as none others are sent to us?) "that our dear departed Father may say Lo! here I am, and the children thou hast given me!" It will be well, if many *so called*, are not found missing in that day.

Now in all this we perfectly agree; but where are the Preachers who have courage and consistency to pursue this plan? With such men we should be glad to live and to die. But if none such are to be found, by the grace of God we will stand true to our principles and profession, and look up unto Him for a blessing.

If I do not meet you at Conference (which at present is uncertain) you will see an Address from the Trustees, and probably the *last* they will ever send; as life is too short and too momentous to be spent in such a contest.

A large circle unite in kind remembrance to Mrs. Benson and yourself, with

Dear Sir,
Your very affectionate
William Pine

P.S. Your good Friends at the New Chapel (i.e. the Stewards and Leaders, *with a Preacher at their Head*) met some time since to take into consideration the Newcastle Letter,¹⁶ and agreed to support the

¹⁶ An address by the Newcastle trustees that supported the Bristol trustees in their dispute with Conference.

same; but since your Answer, and Messrs. Mather and Pawson's Address have come forth, they have been a little staggered, therefore on Tuesday last in the Leaders Meeting they *rescinded* their former Resolutions. Probably they might have stood in the way of opening the Chapel; and who can say they will not be resumed when a favourable opportunity offers?

Bristol 8 August 1796

Dear Sir

I thank you for your Saturday's Letter, as also of that for the expulsion of Killam. The Trustees and some of our particular friends have been consulted respecting the proposed Meeting of Conference, and they have agreed it, tho they do not see what good end it is likely to answer. Some think it would have been better for the Conference to have settled the matter, and if they intend to abide by the Plan of Pacification there is no difficulty therein. It is certain the Society is no more *unanimous* for Preaching in Church hours, and the Sacrament, than they were last year; then why make any farther alteration, and break through positive Rules and Agreements? The old Members are not to be borne down by violence, or overcome by deception. You know very well there are local Preachers here like-minded with ourselves, and that it would be an easy matter to place them at our Head, if we were so minded, and probably travelling ones too; but we have taken no steps of that kind yet, well knowing we had Security in the Agreements of last Conference if we were treating with *honest* men.

There was a Meeting last night at the new Chapel to sign a Letter to Conference. The People were exhorted by Mr. Ashall¹⁷ to firmness and perseverance, were told it was not a matter now between their Preachers and Conference but it depended on themselves. No one could deprive them of their Rights if they were but faithful to each other, and much more to the same effect.

I suppose this Letter is to second the Declaration "that 500 will leave the Society if the Chapel be *not* opened." Probably not Half that number. For I have lately been informed that there were never more than 400 at the Sacraments at Portland Chapel and sometimes not Half that number. But it may also be necessary to enquire How many will leave the Society on the other Side? If *Profit and Loss* are to be calculated, instead of Integrity and Truth, it would be well for the Parties concerned to examine the Balance. We think we made too great Sacrifice last Conference in giving up entirely the Sunday Preaching. Our Friends think it ought to have been alternately. But, however the

¹⁷ John Ashall: held various Wesleyan preaching appointments between 1794 and 1809. He was a minister in the Bristol Circuit in 1795.

new Chapel may be the best for Sunday Congregations, we are sure the Room is best for Week Nights, and many who attend the New Chapel wish it to be brought back again as it is much more convenient and quiet.

As to the *Halveing* the matter, which you mention, it is out of the Question. It is sufficiently *Halved* at Portland Chapel already. There could be no going on upon that ground. The Members of the Church of England could not unite in that Plan. Those of them who are awakened and convinced therein and called to a deeper concern for their Souls (and they are more in number here than you are probably aware of) will not join the Methodists for further Help if they are liable to be drawn away from their Profession and Connections. There must be an Asylum for Persons of this description; but it cannot be with those Methodists who become avowed Dissenters.

Out of near three-score Persons who meet with Mr. Pine not one quarter has or will meet with the other Party; (but they will not be left in this state long) and such would be the case with all *our* Classes were we to give them up.

I have answered Mr. Bradburn's Letter from Conference saying we acceed to their Proposal.

If Mr. Mather comes to Bristol, tell him I have a bed at his service, and shall be glad to see him.

I remain, dear Sir,
Yours very affectionately
William Pine

P.S. Being obliged to attend this Day as an Evidence at our Assizes, I got my Son to copy the above.

Bristol October 20, 1796

My dear Friend

I have delayed writing to you till I could give you some decided Views of our Situation.

Having written to the Chairmen of the Committees of Delegates and some others, our Friends, I thought it necessary to wait their Answers. From Leeds we have received no Answer yet, probably the Blame lies with you. The London Committee advise the shutting the Doors against all the Preachers that officiate in the New Chapel, and our other Friends recommend Firmness in defence of the old Cause.

In two or three weeks after Mr. Bradford¹⁸ had taken the rash step of

¹⁸ Joseph Bradford (?-1808): became an itinerant Wesleyan preacher in 1773, and held many Methodist appointments from then until his death. He was President of the Conference that adopted the Plan of Pacification in 1795, and was again President in 1803.

opening the Chapel, he took another equally rash, of stopping the Pay of those poor People who stood with us during your year's Residence here, most of whom have been in the Society upwards of 40 years, and some of them four score years old, and all of them superannuated. The Leaders in whose classes several of them were placed after Mrs. Pine's Resignation were prevailed upon also to refuse meeting them. The consequence of which was, for near a month they were going from House to House begging, having made use of every Intreaty to obtain their pay, and to be admitted into such Classes as the Preachers should appoint; but they were disregarded. On this the old Trustees and some of their Friends met together to consider the deplorable Case of the Poor, and agreed to grant them Relief by continuing the meeting of their respective Classes, and applying the Monies therein collected to that Purpose.

They have prevailed on Mrs. Pine to meet those who had withdrawn when she resigned being Leader, that they may not be entirely scattered; so there are now eleven Leaders (viz. Mr. Gifford, Roberts, Gee, Rickards, Pine and Wood (late Stocks) and Mrs. Johnson, Green, Marston, Pine and Hurley) and near 200 in the different Classes, who are attached to the old Way, and at the late Visitation of the Classes have refused to meet or take their Tickets. These attend the Lecture at St. Werburgh's on Sunday Evening (which is now much crowded) and on Mondays and Thursdays some of them the Preaching at the Room, and Wednesdays at Guinea Street; for Preaching is still continued there by Mr. Bradford etc. but of whom none of the Trustees or any of your particular Friends take any notice. They suppose that when they are tired of preaching for nothing they will go about their Business. They have applied to us for Candles and other Expenses, but we are determined to contribute nothing but for the Support of Primitive Methodism, and such Preachers as are attached thereunto.

Such is our present Situation. What Relief we are to get when they leave our Chapels, or what form the next Conference, time will discover. But if something effectual be not done to restore *Order* and *Consistency* throughout the Connection, I apprehend Confusion and Anarchy will prevail till all that is of any real worth will be destroyed, and it will become "*a dry, dull, dead, separate Party*" like many of the Dissenters who were once the Praise and Glory of the Land.

We have been now five years endeavoring to save the good old cause, but the *Preachers Fund* and the *Book-room* have stood in our way;¹⁹ and it is well if in the end they have not a similar effect with the *Babylonish Garment* and *Wedge of Gold*!

On Tuesday and Wednesday last a District Meeting was held here, to confirm the violent Steps taken by Mr. Bradford, as Mr. Pritchard and some others objected to Preaching in the New Chapel in Church hours on Sunday Morning without such a Sanction; though they had no Objection to preach at Portland Chapel and to give the Sacrament there!

¹⁹ i.e. funds to support itinerant Methodist preachers.

The old Trustees therefore embraced this opportunity of sending in the following Note:

“To the Preachers assembled at the Bristol District Meeting.

The Trustees of Broadmead and Guinea Street Chapels, conceiving that Mr. Bradford has broken the Engagements entered into between the Conference and the Body of Trustees at large in the Nation, by opening the New Chapel in this city in Church hours on the Lord's day, appeal *in the first Instance to the District Meeting now assembled,** (see note) to take such Steps in the said Business as may to them appear proper on the Occasion, they being the only competent Persons appointed to take Cognizance of the Impropriety of such a Breach of Contract within the District in the Interim of the Sitting of Conference. For if any man or set of men be permitted to violate with Impunity the solemn Decrees of Conference, all confidence and Security in that Body will be destroyed, and they must be considered as a Party with whom no Declarations or Agreements are binding. The said Trustees request they may have the Result of the Deliberations of the District Meeting on the Subject complained of delivered to them in Writing.

Signed on behalf of the said Trustees

William Pine, Secretary.”

Bristol October 18, 1796

* To which the following Answer was returned.

“To the Trustees of Broadmead and Guinea Street Chapels, Bristol. The District Committee, having considered the Letter sent by the Trustees of Broadmead and Guinea Street Chapels, are unanimously of opinion that Mr. Bradford and his Colleagues did the best they could, having only a choice of Evils before them. In considering Mr. Bradford's conduct in opening the New chapel, we cannot lose Sight of the *Man and his Communications* and therefore believe, yea, are persuaded, he acted from pure Motives. We likewise believe that the Trustees, by looking merely at the *circumstance* of Preaching in the New Chapel at half past ten on Sunday Morning, and not at Mr. Bradford's general conduct and well-known character, have, by their hasty and unjust conclusions, misrepresented him to the World! The Committee cannot consider the Trustees' Letter as an “Appeal in the *first Instance*,” seeing they have appealed *in print to the world*, without either attempting to concern the District Committee, or waiting for its assembling.

Signed in behalf of the Committee Samuel Bradburn, Secretary.

Bristol, October 19, 1796

We were not disappointed at all in the Answer. We had before experienced the Partiality of District Meetings, and from thence we expected neither Justice nor Mercy. But we lament to see the Confusion which the Introduction of these new Things has occasioned in the

Connection, and we do not wonder that the Dissenting Party should join Killam, and that even some of our own Friends should see the necessity of a more minute Examination into the Conduct of those Men who have so grievously departed from their original Simplicity and Professions; for Suspicion will naturally arise in Proportion confidence is weakened; and what real benefit can be expected from religious Connection standing on such Ground?

We wish you to shew Mr. Hardon this Letter, and as Chairman of the Trustees Committee we expect he will send us some Answer to our last. The Step of our making Application to the Trustees for Advice was suggested to us by Messrs. Mather and Pawson, when they failed in their Mission. And we shall be particularly obliged to our old Friend *Benson* for his Advice. It does not appear to us that the Parties in Bristol will ever unite again, and if that Measure could by any means be brought about, the union would neither be lasting or profitable.

I hope the length of this Letter will compensate for my long delay in writing, but I had not sufficient materials to compose one that could be satisfactory either to you or myself before.

My Family are all well, through the abounding Mercy of a gracious God, and unite in kindest Remembrance to Mrs. Benson and all yours with

your truly affectionate Friend and Brother

William Pine

*Note – Being the *first* Judicial Court that has sat since the Crime was committed. Their next Application will be to the Conference.

P.S. A remarkable circumstance took place at the late Renewal of Tickets. Mrs. Gifford, without any previous notice to her Husband or any one else, resigned her Ticket and Class Papers into the Hands of Mr. Atmore,²⁰ declaring she would have nothing more to do with them.

²⁰ Charles Atmore: a Wesleyan minister in the Bristol Circuit in 1795.

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